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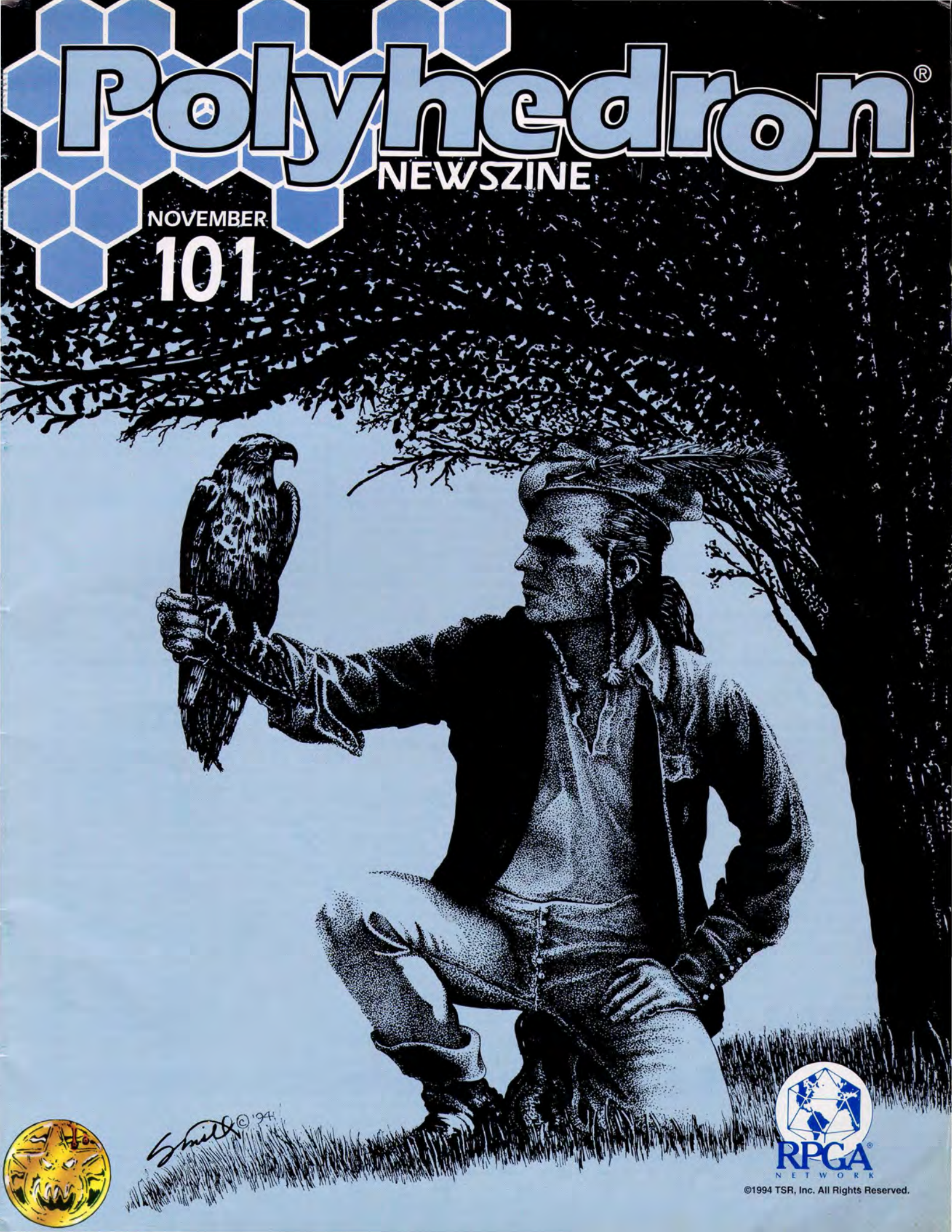

RPGA® NETWORK

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Classifieds

Attention Game Companies: I have just finished *Conflict of the Dawn*, an RPG of primitive (including Stone Age) life. I'm looking for a publisher. The game allows for "modern" primitives, Ice Age, anachronistic prehistoric (i.e., cave men and dinosaurs together), and prehistoric fantasy campaigns. I have it on high-density disk and can send copies in ASCII format immediately. Interested publishers contct: Gregory Detwiler, RD 2 Box 70, Williamsburg PA 16693. Or Call: (814) 832-2575.

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For Sale: Miniatures, 1st and 2nd edition AD&D® game products, IBM games (including Campaign Cartographer, $50), and much more. Up to 1/3 off! Write to: Chris Perry, 23309 Richfield Road, Corning, CA 96021.

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France: Attention Paris! Canadian gamer seeks to assemble or join an English-speaking gaming group in the Paris area. I'll play anything from the AD&D game to RIFTS and am also willing to learn new systems. Willing to form or join a Network club. Jean-Edouard Rostaing, 20 rue Henri-Martin, Boulange-Billancourt, 92100, France. Or call: 46.08.52.75.

General: Long-time gamer who loves road trips needs your help! I'm collecting business cards from gaming stores around North America so that I can visit the stores while on road trips. Thanks for your help! Send cards to: Chris Aahz, 79 S. Seventh Street, San Jose, CA 95112-3532.

General: Join Dragonslayers Unlimited! We publish our own bi-monthly newszine using member submissions of stories, artwork, new games, favorite PCs, new monsters, magical items and spells, tips from GMs, and more. Several club members offer a diverse selection of play-by-mail games for the membership. To preview our newszine, send $2, or to join Dragonslayers Unlimited, send $14 (please make check or money order payable to Jil Conway). All inquiries welcome. Write to: Jil Conway, Rt 6, 3001 Johnson Lane, Columbia, MO 65202-8510.

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General: Guilds of Honor is a PBM role-playing game. It is not very expensive: only $5/turn, and you can get discounts. The action is fast-paced and your turns are taken care of quickly. The set-up is free. Tell them that Steve Fletcher sent you. Write: Alternate Entertainment, Inc., P.O. Box 207, Ely, MN 55731.

General: Join us—a new Network club is starting! We are The Champions of the Golden Dragon, and we play only PBM games, so you can join from anywhere. The membership fee is only $4/year. We have two PBM games and a newszine. Contact: Steve Fletcher at: 510-C, West Harbison Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15205. Or call: (412) 787-7626.

General: I recently joined the Network and have become interested in the Living City, but I'm relatively clueless about how it works. Please write to me to share your knowledge and experience about the Living City. Dan Adams, 1278 Cayton Road, Florence, KY 41042.

General: Trade the RPG stuff you're through with for someone else's stuff you want. Computer matching "want & need" lists on magazines, modules, books, and TSR trading cards. Send in your list to: John Kittrell, 2915 LBJ #161, Dallas, TX 75234. Phone: (214) 530-6251. FAX: (214) 888-0209. The service is free, but please include 56 cents in stamps for current trades list.

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Artist Larry Smith captures Lord Blacktree in a contemplative mood.

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Notes From HQ

A Multitude of Gatherings for Network Members

The RPGA® Network annually sponsors tournaments and activities at nearly 200 conventions around the world. I had the pleasure of traveling to several conventions in the past many months, meeting with old friends who have been Network members longer than I have and discovering the fun of introducing new people to tournament gaming. Let me share a few of my experiences and observations. For those of you who don't live near a city that boasts a convention, think about starting one of your own. It's easy to start small—find a place that will let you hold games for a day—a local library, YMCA, American Legion, hotel, etc. Contact Kevin Melka here at Network HQ for information on setting up your own game day and getting events, we'll print a free convention announcement for you, and off you go!

Origins

California was the sunny setting for this GAMA-sponsored extravaganza. During four days in July, the San Jose convention center was practically bursting at the seams with people who played role-playing games, board games, card games, miniature games, computer games, and more. Members Gary Haynes and Chris McGuigan aptly handled all the RPGA Network events, and were assisted by Allaria Haynes, who can add up the scores on packets faster than just about anyone. Only four hours of the Chemcheaux magic shop were scheduled. I figured there hadn't been much Living City in California, therefore the magic shop didn't need to be open long. Wrong. We ran more than twice that many hours, and Ed Gibson of Ohio took a spot behind the desk to help out.

One of the hits of the convention was a tournament from 1986 called Escape From Demoncomb Mountain by Jay Tummelson. It was the first Grand Masters event and was published years and years ago in the Newszine. Well, there's been a lot of new members since then, and they coerced judges to run the adventure well into the evening on the last day of the convention.

Dragon*Con

This convention got so big this year it had to be hosted in two large hotels in Atlanta, GA. The gaming part of the convention was swarming with activity from a day before the convention started until well after the last event was scored.

Mark Liberman and Sherrie Miller handled the Network events, along with a quick-adding staff of volunteers. Events went smoothly, marshaling into teams was fast and efficient, and many of the seminars were standing room only.

A record 13 and a half hours of the Chemcheaux Magic Shop were run for the Ravens Bluff crowd. Shop assistants included Warren Dimock, Gwendolyn Kestrel, Sherrie Miller, Carl Beuhler, and Dan Donnelly—to name a few. They quickly looked up prices and tallied the value of magical items being traded in.

The Living City events seemed to be the most popular. And it was common to find seven- and eight-player teams. One of the hits was the event, "Tempest in a Teapot," by Lindsay Markus. I won't give too much away, because you should play the event if you have a chance. But there were multiple groups of cliff divers—and equally multiple groups of PCs who stood at the top of the cliff to recount the stories and the splashes. Long-Time Hunting, a favorite local PC was one of the jumpers. He quickly became known as Long-Time Lemming. And lemming buttons and "so and so was pushed" buttons were quickly produced. Each night of the convention also yielded a lengthy session of Living City Poker at the House of Thud, run by Carmen of Aber's Way. Living City Poker is played with Ravens Bluff imaginary money. You lose your character's gold pieces, and your cash stays intact.

Dex Con

New Jersey was the site of this incredible blend of gaming, science fiction, and fantasy. Convention coordinator Vinny Salzillo offered an amazing array of role-playing games, card games, board games, and more. Near the Dealer's Hall (where comic books could be had for a quarter each), a live-action *Space Hulk* was going on. The room was darkened, and little lights along the walls gave the feeling of a real abandoned space ship. Tiles were laid along the floor to indicate the corridors and paths the space marines would take. And the marines were outfitted with plastic guns and flamers. Of course, the corridors were also filled with genestealers, who dealt out imaginary deaths between growls and strange alien noises. It was fun to sit and watch the space marines fall—and to see who would "die" the best.

Pinball machines—that you could play free all day and night—were just down the hall from RPGA Network HQ. There were also banks of computers, though I never got beyond the *Star Wars* pinball machine.

Vinny has a reputation for treating DMs kindly. He set up a room on the second floor where he regularly fed DMs. The DMs were happy. During late-night sessions, volunteers came to the DMs' tables to deliver hotdogs. The DMs were very happy. In fact, I played a Living City tournament that started at midnight (it was a charity event). Mary Schmitt of Washington, D.C., played an able hostess and delivered us refreshments with a smile. The players were happy, too.

Among the activities of the convention was an event called Sugar Fest. Jeff Grubb and myself stood in the corner of this room filled with gum drops, Hershey's kisses, M&Ms, jelly beans,

photos by Kevin Rau

cookie wafers, and pixie stixs. A pixie stix is a straw filled with a colored, flavored sugary substance. Vinny opened the doors, let the gamers in, and he came over to stand by Jeff and me. The room swarmed with gamers just like ants swarm to a picnic. And in the course of several minutes, people were filling Styrofoam cups to the brim, backpacks to bursting, pants and shirts pockets to bulging, and . . . you get the idea. It was an incredible sight. We got jittery just smelling the sugar in the air. Jeff went for the Hershey kisses. I grabbed the gumdrops.

The GEN CON® Game Fair

Thousands of Network members filled the Arena at MECCA at the granddaddy of gaming conventions. Living City tournaments ran with eight-player teams, AD&D® Game events were offered every slot, seminars were standing-room only, and everyone seemed to have a great time.

HQ was manned by Cheryl Frech and her more-than-able assistants Marshall Simpson, Rocco Pisto, Carol Clarkson, Carol Robinson, and David Samuels. Gary Smith and his Andon crew operated the desk in front of HQ. Events were marshalled by the fantastic team of Chris Schon, Doug Behringer, Bill Corey, David Baker, Willi Burger, Bob Parsons, Wayne Straiton, Nicky Rea, Jackie Cassada, Chris Ryan, Mike Adamson, Michele Graham, Zip, Carl Longley, Ted Stadtlander, Mike Whelan, Dave Freeman, Bob Etheridge, Denise Rabidou, Brandon Amancio, Alex Lombardi, and Norm Ritchie. John Vaccaro did a lot of up-front work with coordinating tables and events, and Don Weatherbee put together some impressive Living City material for seminars and the Living City Bazaar—the Network's first attempt at running an interactive at the Game Fair.

Thanks go to all of our shop keepers: Rick Mangekian, Ed Gibson, John Harnes, James Alan, Mike Adamson, Carol Robinson, Michele Graham, Willi Burger, Mark Liberman, Allan Fawcett, Bruce Rabe, Skip Williams, and many others who were drafted at the last minute. Thanks also to our Ravens Bluff personalities: James Ward as Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane, Dave O'Brien as Blacktree, Tom Reid as Rolf "Sunny" Sunriver, Sherrie Miller as the Mysterious Lady, Carl Longley as Arvin Kothanos, Jim Atkiss as Count Strahd, Marshall Simpson as both a paladin and a zombie, Harold Johnson as the inn's proprietor, Nicky Rea and Jackie Cassada as the auctioneers, Mike Selinker as the prelate, Wes Nicholson as Simon, and the Newszine's own Larry Smith as a very memorable Carrague.

The highlight of the convention was our charity auctions and benefit tournaments. More than $13,000 was raised to be divided between the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and the Okada Guide Dog Program of Fontana. Representatives of the organizations were on hand at the awards ceremony. Congratulations to the Network members who pitched in and donated to these very worthwhile organizations.

AndCon

Kicking off the fall line-up of cons was AndCon in Cleveland, Ohio. Gamers flocked to the Living City events which had PCs dogging Discount Merlin, finding stolen wedding presents, hunting mammoths, and well . . . I won't give anything else away—you might play in these events at conventions near you.

Mohammed, the infamous Ravens Bluff personality who has been sought after by the city guard met his end in one of the tournaments. But his player, Elliott Kozel of Chicago, donated his time during one of the convention's charity auction. Dressed as Mohammed, Elliott allowed himself to be tossed in the hotel swimming pool—several times—all for the benefit of the local humane organization.

A highlight of the convention was unveiling part of Dave O'Brien's city map of Ravens Bluff. Dave, who played Blacktree at the GEN CON Game Fair and who works in TSR's computer department, is an excellent computer artist. He is hard at work on a detailed map that will run starting next spring. Plans are to run sections of the map over eight issues of the Newszine. A street name on the map was auctioned at AndCon.

Take Care,

Jean

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The Book Of Exalted Deeds

Or slade's Big Project Rolls off the Presses

by Jean Rabe

When the first volume of ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™ hits the hobby shop shelves at the end of this year, designer slade (no, it's not a typo; a tragic automobile accident severed his surname and permanently crippled his capital S) will breathe a sigh of relief. His grand project will be finished, his months of research will draw to a close, and his trips to my office to complain about the magic items gracing the pages of the POLYHEDRON® Newszine will stop—maybe.

The ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA is a four-volume set filled from covers to covers with detailed accountings of all the magic items that have appeared for the AD&D® and D&D® games. Each hardbound volume will have 416 pages and will sell for $24.95. Compiler of the work, slade is also the author of many of the new magic items nestled inside. The series is edited by Doug Stewart.

"I think it's going to be one of the hottest sellers TSR has ever produced," slade said, grinning from ear to ear. He was sitting in my office discussing the Encyclopedia, while he was playing with the collection of toys on my desk and threatening my very existence.

He reminisced that the project was birthed—in a manner of speaking—in the fall of 1990. New to the company at the time, slade walked into my office with a proposal for a POLYHEDRON Newszine series listing all the magic items in the AD&D game. I love magic items, so naturally I thought it was a wonderful idea. Not knowing at the time just what he'd gotten himself into, slade dove into the project, and I scheduled the series. It would run at least a year.

Enter Jim Ward, who at the time was over the company's game division. He suggested we take slade's magical listing and instead make a product out of it, one produced by the Network.

"Originally we were going to put in a description of each item, but it wouldn't fit," slade recalls. "It ended up just being an index." That index was the two-volume Magic Encyclopedia. Volume I was released in 1992, and the larger Volume II in 1993.

"I got a lot of letters saying it was a real cool thing. But I also got complaints because there were no descriptions," said slade.

He went back to the drawing board, and the concept for the ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA was born.

"There are about 60 pages of swords, and somewhere between 70 to 90 pages of books, tomes, librams, and manuals." At this point slade's eyes grew wide with excitement and he put down my green rubber dragon. "The thing that is really nice is that you can look under one entry and find what you're after. Every type of sword and pole arm is there. Like the *bec de corbin of lightning*. There are 17 different types of weapon categories . . . axes cover hand axes, battle axes . . . clubs have saps and bludgeons. Then there are sections on musical instruments—percussion, string, wind. All the different types of *arrows of slaying* are in there, all of Heward's mystical organs, Vecna's body parts."

Swords are given names in the volumes, he said. "For example, a sword that is +1 vs. magic using creatures, +2 vs. reptiles, +3 vs. shape-changers, and +4 vs. something else has a name now. A fighter isn't going to say 'I draw my *+1, +2, +3, +4 sword*.' He's going to say 'I draw *Scalebane*.' "

There is also a section on enchantment enhancements, where DMs can create special weapons and items. DMs can select the magic they want, or they can roll on a table and create something unusual.

"The whole idea is to let people feel they have a unique weapon, something no other character has."

slade said he prefers magic items that have a history, weapons that were forged by someone for a special purpose, rather than assembly line *long swords +1*. "Histories make an item feel more valuable. It's better to get Rary's cloak that he used in the slaying of the Circle of Eight than just a *cloak of protection*."

The Encyclopedia includes items from modules, boxed sets, core rules, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™ appendices, and magazines. For example, magic items printed in DRAGON® Magazine issues #1-200, POLYHEDRON Newszine #1-90, DUNGEON® Adventures #1-45, IMAGINE™ Magazine #1-30, and several issues of *Strategic Review* were selected.

"There will be quite a few new items," slade said. "I bribed several people from the design department to write some. And Ed Greenwood sent in some stuff. Then I created a bunch, too. One of my favorites is *Prismal's block and tackle*." Prismal is a character from slade's old campaign world, and he used the character in the POLYHEDRON Newzine for the much-heralded introduction of the Chemcheaux Shop in Ravens Bluff.

"Prismal has a friend in the Living City who works on the docks as a dock hand. It's not easy work. The guy was getting married, and Prismal decided to make this gift. It reduces arm and back pain and does a lot of the work for him," slade said. "Another of my favorites is *Prismal's whetstone*. It will sharpen any nonmagical item and put a temporary dweomer on it."

There are some items in the volumes that he's not happy with, slade added, and for which he thinks certain Network coordinators should be hanged for printing, but he included them for completeness.

"Some of the lousiest items came from the first five issues of DRAGON Magazine," he said. "*Mountain seeds* is the absolute worst. It is a seed. You throw it and it turns into a mountain and crushes whole armies, cities. Hill seeds are designed to crush villages. They're really bad."

He again menaced my well-being and complained about several items in previous issues of the Newzine, such as the *Sword of Babette Maelstrom* which—among its other powers—can inflict 200d100 points of damage. (Of course, I pointed out to slade that running a few pages of swords in issue #70, even though some of them were—unusual—seemed like a perfectly good idea at the time.)

"Then there are campaign wreckers," he said, picking up the rubber dragon again and sticking his finger in its mouth. "*Blackrazor* is a sword from the "S" series of modules. When you kill someone or hit them, you get those hit points above and beyond the hit points

of your class and level limit. It's pretty awful. I guess its supposed to be something like Stormbringer from Elric.

"And a really awful new item is a Tri-entry from one of my campaigns. It's a nasty chaotic little sword that can screw up your character and his opponent."

slade said despite temptation, he did not tinker with the items he culled from previously-published products—other than to give them Gold Piece sale values and Experience Point values.

"We've tried to keep the flavor of each item. If the item was simple, we tried to keep it that way." He rolled his eyes and looked at a spot on the ceiling. "If something was supposed to be silly, it stayed silly."

There are footnotes on some of the items, added slade. "Like the *sword of underwear snatching*. It's an apology that says the item was created for a name-that-sword contest in POLYHEDRON Newszine #70."

Glowering at a small stack of Newszines, slade said he does not care for what he terms "pun items" or too-silly magic. Then he glowered at me.

"The reason why I said I wanted to throttle you is that a large percentage of the pun items came from the Newszine. Pun items are not conducive to a long-running campaign. I like funny stuff, but not funny items. A funny magic item is like a joke somebody keeps telling over and over. A disposable joke item is okay, they're one-shot things. So that's why I wanted to string you up by your toenails."

Still, slade admits humorous magic has its place in some campaigns. And he said some of the serious magical items in the collection gave him ideas of how to reward and penalize players.

He said if a player was giving him problems in a campaign, he'd have the player's character find one of Vecna's body parts.

"To the best-liked player I'd give no magical item at all. Magical items get abused sometimes and make characters stop thinking. Players rely too much on magic. I'd make a character use his mind. Or maybe I'd give him disposable magic, something he would outgrow or could only use once. At the Game Fair I run a killer dungeon called Sameal's Hall and challenge people to bring high-level characters with lots of magic. The last time I ran it we had up to 45th level characters, and the average was 23rd or 24th level. The highest-level ones dripping in magic were the ones to die first because they didn't think and relied on the magic. Of the nine who survived the dungeon, eight were under 8th level."

Perhaps the next time slade runs Sameal's Hall, the characters will be dripping with magical items from his Encyclopedia.

The Encyclopedia has been a time-consuming project, slade admits—the most time intensive venture he's been involved in since coming to TSR. He grumbles about logging at least 2,500 hours on the volumes, including a record 122-hour work week. The text is dense, with 1,400 to 1,600 words a page—about double the number of words per page in some products. After the initial volume goes on sale at the end of this year, the remaining volumes will be released in 1995.

"After that we'll probably be putting out an annual with all the new items," slade added. "And somewhere down the road I'd like to see TSR do a wizard's spell book and a priest's spell book with all the magical spells we've published."

And about more magic items from the Newszine finding their way into the annuals? slade frowned but nodded his agreement. He likes to be complete in his projects. However, he requested to have a hand in some of the Network's numerous magical contests—since he will be compiling the fruits of the authors' labors.

Hence, slade and the Network staff announce the first "Slade's Corners" contest (named after a city near Lake Geneva, WI). Those members who have read this far are eligible to participate.

"This contest is for disposable and consumable magic items," slade said. "Give a PC something to use that he will outgrow or that runs out of power or has charges. Charges is a great way to limit magic. How about a sword that allows you to fight as a 5th level fighter, but when you reach 5th level it does you no good anymore? What about a weapon that's used as a spell component? I'd like to see just how creative people can get with disposables and consumables. The more creative the better. Giving them histories would be cool, too."

Slade says all the items from the contest that are published in the Newszine will appear in subsequent ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA annuals.

"But no stupid, funky items such as *Rary's nose pick*. That would be a dumb item. No more *swords of underwear snatching*."

So there's the contest. Design an item that has something temporary about it, make it fit the AD&D game, and make sure it doesn't exceed one typed page.

Enter as many times as you like. The deadline is January 1, 1995. Winning entries will receive an autographed copy of ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA Volume 1.

Address your entries to "Slade's Corners," c/o POLYHEDRON Newszine, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Nothing too silly, okay? The editors are rather attached to their toenails. ❑

Adversaries

Ulrica Meryon and Yolanda Soult

by Skip Williams

Castle Neelburg and the surrounding barony have lain in ruins for seven decades. Once famous for its vineyards and verdant farmland, the area is now blighted, and the wilderness has slowly reclaimed the fields.

The roots of Neelburg's downfall stretch back three generations, when Evan Meryon, overlord of the castle, was forced to sell his birthright to cover his debts. Evan was not particularly bitter about his misfortune. He simply gathered up what remained of his dignity and moved to a sturdy cottage which had served as a hunting lodge in better times.

Evan appears to have enjoyed his forced retirement. He had salvaged enough of his personal fortune to live comfortably with a few loyal servants. Eventually, he took an elven wife who bore him a daughter.

Evan's successor, Damian Soult, was a jolly soul who made the most of his new status as lord of the castle. Damian's hunting parties, balls, and tournaments were famous. Though Damian spent his money even more freely than Evan had, his head for business kept his coffers full. The Soult family also distinguished itself on the battlefield several times, though their martial feats claimed the lives of all Damian's sons, and the castle was passed on to a distant cousin who married Damian's eldest daughter.

Shortly after the cousins married, the family's idyllic existence came to an end. Banditry, always kept in check under the Meryons, began to rise. Tales of a strange beast began to circulate among the common folk, and the tales seemed true.

Something was slaughtering the villagers' livestock and prowling the streets at night. The Soult's guards were faced with the double task of hunting brigands and tracking the mysterious beast. These twin perils eventually claimed all the Soult heirs. The sons were killed in a series of skirmishes with brigands and surprise assaults by the beast. The Soult's two daughters met even more horrible ends when they were accused of lycanthropy and executed by a mob.

The pattern of misfortune repeated itself as even more Soult cousins took possession of the castle. The curse of the Soults became widely known, and the once lush barony fell into ruins. So it has remained until recently, when

Yolanda Soult appeared on the scene with a chest of gold and began to re-establish her family's claim. For several years, her followers made good progress in clearing the land and restoring its former productivity. As the barony began to bloom again, Yolanda became the region's most marriageable lady. Then, the curse of the Soult's struck again. Several of Yolanda's suitors have been killed and the people in the villages are again locking their doors at night.

Ulrica Meryon (P10): THAC0 14; Dmg special; AC 0; hp 60; MV 6; AL CE
S 20, D 15, C 18, I 12, W 18, Ch 16

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, mace, dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Musical instrument (flute) (16), etiquette (16), read/write Common (13), religion (18)
Spells/Day: 6 6 5 5 2
Special Abilities: *Mass charm* once a day, mummy abilities.

Spells Preferred: 1st level: *Command* (x3), *entangle* (x2), *pass without trace*; 2nd level: *hold person* (x2), *augury, heat metal, warp wood* (x2); 3rd level: *prayer, meld into stone* (x2), *snare, spike growth*; 4th level: *free action* (x2), *undetectable lie, reflecting pool, plant door*; 5th level: *air walk, flame strike*

Ulrica is Evan's daughter. She is a striking woman with silver hair, skin tinged slightly green (a legacy from her elven mother), and emerald green eyes. At 152 years old, Ulrica appears as a normal half-elven woman, though she is really a mummy.

Ulrica enjoyed a pampered childhood, despite her father's reduced circumstances. A gaggle of adoring servants surrounded her constantly, and she was the apple of her father's eye. It was perhaps inevitable that she would become willful and spoiled. Although supplied with ample creature comforts, she began to yearn for what her father had lost. She took to gazing enviously at the Soult's obvious wealth, and she came to hate the entire family, although she had never met any of them.

Ulrica's mother was painfully aware of her daughter's resentments and growing bile toward the Soults. She resolved to take young Ulrica away from the lodge and go to live among her elven relatives; but Ulrica refused to go and her father, blind to Ulrica's faults, supported her. Shortly thereafter, Ulrica's mother left the lodge, never to return. Free from her mother's influence, Ulrica studied dark lore and became a priestess of Loki.

After her father's death, Ulrica began to plot the downfall of the Soults. She insinuated herself into the household as a servant and tutor to the Soult children. She also made contact with several local outlaws. From her position in the household, Ulrica learned the schedules for baronial patrols. She passed this information to the outlaws, who were able to strike wherever the baronial guards weren't. Ulrica was overjoyed when Damian's sons were killed, and she sealed the daughters' fates by cursing them to become were-beasts. Once the curse had done its work, it was a simple matter for Ulrica to betray the girls to the mob.

Ulrica was still a valued advisor when Damian's heirs took over. Damian's successor, Wallas Soult, was a perceptive man, however, and began searching for the traitor in his own household. Faced with exposure, Ulrica wove a more enduring curse against the Soult household. While Ulrica remained dispossessed, every female Soult heir would suffer from lycanthropy. Then, Ulrica took her own life in a dramatic gesture, ostensibly to prove her loyalty. Wallas was completely taken in and had Ulrica buried in the castle's crypt.

In keeping with Ulrica's unspoken wish to witness the Soult's downfall, Loki transformed her into an undead mummy. Not the bandaged-wrapped creature familiar to most adventurers, but an animated corpse preserved exactly as she was at the moment of her death. She is imbued with supernatural strength, and is immune to normal weapons. She suffers half damage from melee attacks and is immune to all forms of cold. Her gaze causes fear in any living creature she looks upon (creatures who meet her gaze suffer a -2 saving throw penalty). Her touch inflicts a lingering curse.

The victim suffers ill fortune in the form of a -2 or -10% penalty on all saving throws, ability checks, and other rolls involving the character's fate. The penalty does not affect attack and damage dice. A cursed victim sickens and dies in 1d6+1 months unless a *remove curse* spell is administered. Ulrica can *change self* three times a day as a 9th level caster. She has infravision with a 90-foot range, and if damaged she can recover all of her lost hit points in 1d4+1 days. However, she can be slain permanently if the original document confirming the transfer of the barony from Evan Meryon to Damian Soult is destroyed. Ulrica cannot approach within 60 feet of this document. When the Soults finally abandoned the castle, Ulrica fell into a long slumber.

Yolanda Soult (T11): THAC0 15, 13 short sword, 12 dagger; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+2 sword, 1d4+3 dagger; AC 0; hp 45; MV 6; AL CE; MI *Bracers of defense AC 5, ring of protection +1, ring of invisibility, slippers of spider climbing, dagger +3, dagger of venom, short sword +2, pouch of accessibility*
S 12, D 18, C 13, I 10, W 14, Ch 16

Weapon Proficiencies: Short sword, short bow, dagger, club
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Blind-fighting, land-based riding (horse) (17), tumbling (18), forgery (18)
Thief Abilities: PP 99%; OL 88%; FT 75%; MS 97%; HS 80%; DN 35%; CW 99%; RL 55%

At 32 years, Yolanda is a statuesque young woman with flowing black hair and high cheekbones. Her eyes are icy blue, but sparkle with inner fire. Yolanda is also the infamous highway robber known as the Gray Cloak. Several years ago, she waylaid a caravan and discovered one of Damian Soult's many cousins. After questioning the man, she discovered the tale of castle Neelburg and the family curse.

The story intrigued Yolanda, and she decided that becoming a baroness would be a fine way to retire from her criminal life. Yolanda dissolved her band of cutthroats and forged several documents that prove she is Damian Soult's descendant. She carefully placed the bogus documents in several town halls and collections of official records. Once she gained legal claim to the castle, Yolanda took up residence. She didn't fear the Soult curse, because she was not a Soult.

Unfortunately for Yolanda, Ulrica's curse falls on any of Damian's female heirs. Though not a descendant, Yolanda has made herself Damian's heir. Plus, the reopening of castle Neelburg has awakened Ulrica from her slumber in the crypts below.

Yolanda has now become a werewolf who preys on her associates and servants. She undergoes her lycanthropic transformation with every new moon and when she witnesses a celebration. When a werewolf, Yolanda's Armor Class is 5 and she cannot use her thief skills or magical items. She is beginning to suspect her curse, but cannot bring herself to admit it.

How To Use Ulrica & Yolanda

Ulrica literally will not rest until Yolanda is driven away. Her mummy powers are limited, but her spells grant her considerable mobility and the power to influence Yolanda's subordinates. She occasionally walks abroad, posing as a soothsayer who makes ominous predictions.

There are several ways the PCs might become involved. Yolanda might hire them as guards. One of the slain suitors' relatives might hire the PCs to investigate the death. Amorous PCs could seek Yolanda's hand. In this case, she is willing to allow the PCs to investigate mysterious happenings in the barony, provided they do not pry into her past. If they discover the transfer document, Yolanda is loathe to let them destroy it. Yolanda, however, is doomed to remain a werewolf until she renounces the claim (or undertakes a quest and receives a *remove curse* spell).

Illustrations by Eva Duenzinger ❑

Back In Black

One of the Living City's Most Infamous Characters Returns

By Lew Wright and Bruce Rabe

Lord Charles Frederick LaVerne Blacktree IV
10th Level Male Human Noble Fighter

STR: 14
INT: 10
WIS: 10
DEX: 15
CON: 13
CHR: 12
AC: 3
Hit Points: 63
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish
THAC0: 11

Age: 37
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 166 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Dark brown/Hazel

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword (specialized), lance, long bow, horseman's flail, dagger, javelin
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Riding horses (12), etiquette (12), heraldry (10), dancing (15), hunting (9), read/write Common (11), swimming (14), animal training—falcons and eagles (10), mountaineering
Magic Items: *Studded leather armor +3, long sword +3, dagger +2, ring of free action, amulet of spell storing (dispel magic, strength, invisibility, shield, detect magic), gauntlets of swimming and climbing, necklace of protection from normal missiles*

Followers: Sir Henry Mason; Knight Captain, 10 1st-level human knights, 10 1st-level elf fighters, 20 1st-level human fighters, eight personal guards; 30 0-level troops

Charles Frederick LaVerne Blacktree IV was born into one of the most powerful and influential families in the Vast. The second child of David Merchant Oster Blacktree and Melanie of Rothington Manor north of Ravens Bluff, he grew up doted on by servants and overlooked by his parents. Charles watched while his older brother, David received the attention and preparation given an honored son and lord to be, and the youngest Blacktree often found himself excluded and resentful.

His lack of "proper" upbringing made him ill-prepared to handle the mantle of the Blacktree estate when his parents and brother died in a storm aboard their merchant ship, *Lady Sarah*. Charles was in his teens at the time, and although the death of his family devastated him, his newfound wealth and power kept him occupied. The young lord was handed the position of Lord Speaker of the Advisory Council of Ravens Bluff, a position his father had maintained for years. While the council passed on the title to the youth as a means of honoring the Blacktree name, the members soon came to regret their decision—as Charles was not ready for the burden of politics.

The young Blacktree became spoiled and unmotivated, ordering servants about at his whim, doing little on his own, and turning the Lord Speaker's position into a mockery.

By the time he was in his mid-20s, he was recognized as a politically ignorant womanizer and a dandy who enjoyed the finest life had to offer—and who offered nothing in return. He was infatuated with himself and his lordly station, and it was clear he wanted the respect of everyone.

Because Charles was so preoccupied with luxuriating in the best the Living City had to offer, he appointed a loyal servant of the Blacktree family, Hans Silverspeak, to manage his estate. Hans provided Charles with enough gold to maintain a comfortable house in Ravens Bluff and advised the young Lord on civic affairs. Hans kept Charles busy and away from the northern manor house so he could run the Blacktree business ventures—and profit from them.

Using his power and status as regent, Hans carefully skimmed a percentage from each Blacktree dealing. Hans' greedy deeds went unnoticed, and the regent became wealthy and corrupt, and the Blacktree name became tainted.

Charles continued dabbling in Ravens Bluff politics, oblivious to what was happening to the Blacktree estate. The members of the Advisory Council became increasingly irritated with the pompous Lord Speaker and pressured Mayor O'Kane to replace Blacktree. Eventually the Mayor complied by inviting prominent citizens to submit applications for the position. Blacktree was outraged and insulted, yet he applied to keep his vaunted Lord Speaker title.

In the end, Mayor O'Kane replaced Charles Blacktree with Melissa Eldaren, a druidess who was respected by the Advisory Council members. Charles remained in Ravens Bluff for a few weeks, then left on one of his ships bound for across the Sea of Fallen Stars—not wanting to endure the great humiliation of his public loss, and not wanting to watch Melissa parade around with his title.

Away from his opulent lifestyle, Charles began to adventure with some of his crew. When they failed to jump at his every demand, he was forced to fend for himself, to live off the land, and to fight his own battles.

He quickly mastered several combat styles and gained the genuine respect of his companions. Charles grew to consider himself their equal, not their better, and in so doing he discovered the value and importance of true friendship.

Charles' band sailed the western side of The Reach and regularly helped thwart the pirates in the area. They took landward and delved into ruins, where Charles came face-to-face with his first dragon, a beast he and his companions narrowly defeated. The band snared the dragon's considerable horde—thousands of gold coins, casks of gems, and dozens of magical items—and returned to Ravens Bluff.

Upon his arrival in the Living City, Charles again took up residence in his downtown manor house. He resumed his appearances at parties and festivities, and he spent much of his share of the dragon's horde on the ladies. But he looked on life differently, acting more like an adult responsible for himself and his actions.

illustration by Larry Smith

Insulated in the upper crust, he was slow to hear the rumors about his supposed attempts on city officials' lives and about various other misdeeds. The rumors were widespread, and they particularly thrived amid the common folk. Admittedly his past was not sterling, but Charles was irked that people were whispering about what they believed were his activities *now*. He was especially appalled the citizens were linking him to criminal goings-on.

Hans had made contacts with several thieves during the time that Lord Charles was sailing on the Sea of Fallen Stars, and he had gained their loyalty by lining their pockets. When he became uncomfortable about Charles' scrutiny, Hans contacted the thieves, and they offered to murder his employer. While Hans declined, he asked they ruin his reputation.

The thieves are responsible for the vicious rumors that eventually reached Charles' ears.

Frustrated at the tales, Charles retreated to his estate north of the city and buried himself with work. He soon found discrepancies in the Blacktree business ledgers. Hans was adamant that the figures were correct. But Charles was suspicious and questioned the nearby lords, gaining vital bits of information. Charles strongly suspected that something was amiss, but could not prove anything against Hans. Still, Charles' questions about various misappropriated funds alerted Hans' thief friends.

Time passed, and the rumors about Charles' criminal activities intensified. Five months to the day he returned to the city, he was charged with crimes of murder, extortion, and robbery. The thieves' vicious gossip finally had been successful in framing him. Though Blacktree endured a trial, there was not enough evidence to convict him. Still, he suffered in the eyes of the public, losing the esteem he once held so dear.

Angry that his family name had been sullied, Charles contacted Chief Prelate Sirrus Melandor, and asked him publicly to prove his guilt or innocence. Sirrus agreed to cast clerical spells that would reveal whether Charles was answering questions truthfully. Another hearing was held, the magic was cast, and Sirrus' querries showed that Lord Blacktree had no hand in criminal activities. The audience was stunned, but pleased. And Charles pressed the matter by demanding Sirrus cast the same truthful magic on his servant Hans Silverspeak, who also was in attendance.

Hans quickly attempted to leave the chamber, but the curious crowd held him fast. Charles immediately seized the opportunity. "How much of the Blacktree estate have you stolen from me, Hans? How much?"

Hans initially refused to answer on the basis that he was deeply offended by the insult. But Sirrus insisted he reply. "Nothing," Hans replied. "I've stolen nothing."

His answer caused him to glow red, evidence he was lying. When the light faded, Charles continued.

"Are you responsible for the rumors about me? For framing me for theft, murder, and worse?"

Hans said no. But the red light surrounding him indicated otherwise. The incensed crowd immediately mobbed Hans, and it took the City Watch several minutes to restore order to the meeting. Hans was taken to the city gaols, and he later failed in court to

successfully defend himself against Lord Blacktree's charges. Mere days before Hans Silverspeak was to be executed, he escaped with the aid of his dishonest friends. Hans is believed to have left Ravens Bluff.

Charles' honor still remains in question among some of the lords of the city. However, Charles successfully cleared the Blacktree name in the eyes of the common citizen, and he is once again held in high esteem.

Charles regained his rights of lordship and his position on the Ravens Bluff Council of Lords. There he is an active force, far removed from the image he presented years ago as the Lord Speaker of the city's Advisory Council. Lord Charles now divides his time between his manor house in the city and his family estate, and he concentrates on politics and policies rather than on social gatherings.

He was recently appointed Field General of the Ravens Bluff army. Charles gained many life experiences and leadership abilities while sailing on the Sea of Fallen Stars, and he calls upon these traits well in his new position. Although he believes himself competent enough to lead a force into battle if the city is threatened, he fervently hopes such action never will come to pass.

A new wave of gossip has arisen regarding Charles. It seems that while the Blacktree and Moorland families have been allies and friends for many generations, Charles Blacktree and Lady Katherine Marie Moorland are especially close. Ravens Bluff traveling merchants have spotted her retinue at the Blacktree family estate and have begun speculating whether the Lord will finally become a family man. The rumors circulate amid various factions within the city. In fact, many of the citizens of Ravens Bluff believe that these two will wed in the not too distant future.

Henry Mason
7th Level Male Human Paladin

STR:	17
INT:	11
WIS:	15
DEX:	15
CON:	18
CHR:	12

AC: 6 (-1)
Hit Points: 70
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Dwarvish, Common
THAC0: 14

Age: 27
Height: 6'4"
Weight: 235 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Black/ Brown

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, lance, long bow, javelin, dagger, spear
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Riding (19), etiquette (14), heraldry (11), swimming (17), blind-fighting

Magic Items: *Plate mail +1, shield +1, long sword +2, horseshoes of speed* shod to a heavy warhorse with chain barding

Sir Henry is a robust, dark-complected man with numerous scars on his face. He is missing most of his left ear and the ring finger on his left hand. Many parents recount stories to their children using Henry's visage as the villain's. And many common folk shun him when he walks through the streets of the Living City.

But the citizens know very little about this gentleman who worships Tyr and who is one of Lord Blacktree's most devoted employees. Henry owes his life to Charles, and he has vowed to lay down his own life to protect Lord Blacktree if necessary.

Henry was the captive of a band of pirates who were savagely interrogating him about Tyr temples. The pirates wanted the temples' gold relics, and were also intent on raiding ships carrying holy items to the temples. Henry had no intention of aiding them and withstood blow after blow to his once-handsome face. Charles and his band were sailing across the Sea of Fallen Stars when they found the pirate vessel, boarded it, and promptly rescued the tortured Henry.

Henry enthusiastically joined Charles and his pirate hunters, and pledged an oath upon his sword he would forever protect and defend Lord Charles Blacktree. Charles responded quickly by making Henry his first knight. Henry was uncertain if he should hold such a station, given his facial disfigurement.

However, Charles insisted that the measure of a man was more than appearance, and when Blacktree returned to the Ravens Bluff port, Henry stood beside him on the deck.

Henry, a native of Waterdeep, quickly became enamored with Ravens Bluff. He is especially fond of the wharf district, where all manner of people live and work.

He knows most of the citizens avoid him because of his appearance, and that they sell goods to him and act cordially when he is in their midst because of his attachment to Lord Charles.

Still, he is hopeful they will one day see past his face and into his heart, just as they saw past the vicious rumors that haunted Lord Charles.

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Turkey Feathers

An AD&D® Game Adventure For Characters of Levels 2 to 4

by Jan Adamson

In this AD&D® game scenario, a group of inexperienced heroes must take on what seems to be a very ordinary and even boring task: delivering a flock of 500 turkeys from a turkey farm to town.

Unknown to the player characters (PCs), a gang of thieves plans to steal the herd. The PCs' employers—a retired band of adventurers—are aware of the thieves and try to lure them away with an illusionary turkey herd, entrusting the real flock to the PCs.

The turkeys are a special delicacy in a town across the sea, a town that has an annual festival coming up. The townspeople spend more than normal for good turkeys (1 gold piece each), and this is how the PCs' employers make most of their income for the year.

The adventure begins after the PCs have been approached by the turkey farmers, a surprisingly competent-looking group. The farmers offer the PCs 30 gold each to drive the turkeys to town, but they are willing to negotiate as high as 50 gold each. If the PCs need greater encouragement (as well they might), the farmers play upon the character's sympathies, pointing out that they're in desperate need of help.

The introduction below assumes that the PCs are heroic enough to help and have accepted the offer.

> It's time for the annual turkey drive, and you've been hired to see the birds safely to the ships which take them to all the high-paying customers across the sea.
>
> It's a big responsibility because, if you don't succeed, your employers will be going hungry this winter—and you can't allow that to happen.
>
> Fortunately, because you are prepared for anything, nothing bad will happen to the turkeys.

Allow the PCs to equip themselves as they see fit. Their employers, the turkey farmers, supply them with twenty 100-pound bags of turkey feed and a small, mule-drawn wagon.

> The trail thus far has been easy to follow. Although it's not the normal trail you take to town, it is easier to herd the turkeys down. Who would have ever thought five hundred turkeys would be so hard to handle?
>
> The sun is just starting to come over the horizon, so it is time to start the morning routine of counting the turkeys. Luckily, you were able to stop in a stand of trees last night, no standing out in the cold wind like the past two nights.
>
> You turn to where you left the turkey herd bedded down for the night, ready to do the morning turkey count. It wouldn't do to have an inaccurate count of how many turkeys you have thus far. As you stroll through the trees looking for the turkeys on the ground, it hits you all at once. There is not a single turkey to be seen amid the grass.
>
> Looking up in fright, you realize that all the turkeys are in the trees. This won't do at all. You have to be in town in five days, and it will take every minute of that time at the rate the turkey herd travels. There's no hope for it; you'll have to get the turkeys out of the trees.

During the night, all the turkeys took refuge in the surrounding trees. The PCs must get the turkeys out of the trees if they want to get started before mid-morning.

One possible solution is spreading grain under the trees to get the turkeys out of the trees. It takes fifteen 100-pound bags of feed to get all the turkeys to come out of the trees, ten 100-pound bags of feed for half of the turkeys to come out of the trees. If only five 100-pound bags of feed are used, only about one-fourth of the turkeys come down. This is because the turkeys are scattered all over the forest, and—unless a lot of grain is used—not all the turkeys notice the grain.

The PCs can climb the trees and chase the turkeys off the branches. Simple Dexterity checks allow the PCs to climb safely (thief characters can use their climb walls abilities, if those are better). Failed checks indicate a fall. If some of the PCs fall, they may make a Strength check to hang on the branch instead of falling 10 or 20 feet (50/50 chance) to the ground. If the PCs pick up long branches (staves work), they can reach the lower branches of the trees and clear them of turkeys, but the upper branches still contain birds.

The turkeys, if left to themselves, come out of the trees about mid-morning. The turkeys have had a hard couple of days and are not at all eager to move yet. They can be scared out of the trees, but then they run all over the forest gobbling as if a fox were hot on their tail. If forced out of the trees, they go to the ground and scratch in the dirt.

Turkeys (500): THAC0 17; #AT3; Dmg 1/1/1d2; AC 5; HD 1; hp 3; MV 9; INT Semi AL N; SZ S

Wayhouse

Once the turkeys are out of the trees, it is a quiet trip until about mid-afternoon. The trail the PCs are following goes by an isolated cabin. It is nicely kept and fairly new. This is the home of two weretigers.

> It has been an uneventful day after getting the turkeys out of the trees. It is just past mid-afternoon, and time for a small break for a snack. There is a clearing ahead on the trail, with a fairly new cabin in it. Across the middle of the trail is a gate with a split rail fence extending 50 feet on each side of the gate. As you approach, the door opens, and out step a man and a woman. They look fairly young and are tousled as if just woken from a nap.

The weretigers are trying to get some fowl so they don't have to travel into town for food. They don't have much to trade, so they have started a toll gate. There is a gate in the middle of the trail, with 50 feet of split rail fence extending on each side. About 20 feet of open space stretches between the end of the fence and the forest on each side.

"Well, howdy folks. It's nice to see new faces in these parts. I'm known as Sandy, and this here is my wife, Cally. Nice flock of turkeys you've got there. Nice to finally see some honest traffic on this here trail. Hope you can keep them out of my newly sown wheat field. It's all my wife and I have to get through the coming winter. Don't know what we'd do if we lost that wheat."

If the PCs ask about the house, tell them they see two cats in a window (watch cats) and both Sandy and Cally wear short swords. There is a newly plowed field in back of the house, but nothing is planted there yet (any character with the agriculture nonweapon proficiency can automatically know this if the player asks about the field).

There is no way to keep the turkeys out of the empty field. If the PCs don't notice that there wasn't wheat back there, Sandy puts on a long face and continues.

"Oh, my. Look at what them birds of yours did. They ate up all my grain. Now Cally's going to go hungry all winter; the store don't give credit if they don't see a crop coming up. This means we'll have to go live with her folks again. And just when we were gaining some independence. I don't suppose you'd care to leave some of those birds here so we wouldn't have to move back in with her folks would you? It would mean a lot to my wife, us wanting children and all. They sure would make the difference between staying here and moving back in with her folks."

The weretigers initially demand 50 turkeys for passage, but they settle for as few as five. They do not take money, as they cannot eat money and it is too far to town to get supplies.

If the PCs noticed the field does not contain any grain, the weretigers try another tack, playing on their sympathy.

"Well, I guess I did fib a little about that field being planted with grain. But if I wasn't so desperate, I wouldn't have said that. You know how it is when you first start out. Cally's Dad saying we'd never make it on our own. We would have, if the river hadn't flooded and taken our wagon with it. Now all we have is each other."

"If things don't start improving, we'll end back up at her parent's place again this winter. We so wanted a place of our own so that we could start our own family. And you have so much, and we have so little."

Cally looks downtrodden and forlorn at the PC who looks most sympathetic. If asked, she backs up whatever Sandy has been saying, and adds that there is no privacy at her parents' house for newlyweds.

If things go peacefully, Sandy might even throw in a couple bags of grain for the herd, and Cally serves mint tea for refreshment.

If the weretigers are threatened, they back off, keep track of where the turkeys bed down for the night, and "liberate" 30 of the turkeys. If this happens, the PCs can come back the next day, but the were-tigers will not be home.

If the PCs actually attack the weretigers, the weretigers defend themselves until one is reduced to below one-third of his or her total hit points. At that point they retreat and resort to stealing turkeys at night when the PCs are sleeping.

If the PCs kill one of the weretigers, the surviving weretiger has a 50% chance of going berserk and attacking the closest PC until that character stops moving. If the tiger doesn't go berserk, it runs away to nurse its grief.

Weretigers (2): THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1d8 long sword, 1d4/1d4/1d12 claw, claw, bite; AC 3; HD 6+2; hp 30, 23; SA rake if both claws hit, extra damage 1d4+1/1d4+1; SD +1 or silver weapons to hit; SZ M

Nightwatch

The next night passes peacefully if the weretigers received at least five turkeys. If not, the weretigers steal 30 turkeys if neither of them were hurt. If either of the weretigers were hurt or killed, they steal 50 turkeys.

Unless taking extraordinary precautions, the PCs do not notice the theft until morning, because the weretigers creep up while in wereform to move quietly. This is not the first raid Sandy and Cally have been on. The weretigers wait until the PCs are on the opposite side of the herd before stealing any turkeys.

In the morning, the trail of turkey feathers are plain to any PC making a tracking roll, but the feathers run out in about a mile (the weretigers put the turkeys in bags and took to the trees). If the PCs go after the missing birds, mention the possibility of losing the entire herd over turkeys already missing. If they still decide to go after the missing birds, remind the PCs that it is a long way to town and that they will have to push the remainder of the herd, with a good chance of losing more than were already lost to the thieves. They will have to push on through the nights, losing about 20% of the herd, just making it to town on time. Turkeys like to roost at night.

River Crossing

After a few hours' travel, the PCs come to a river crossing. The water is only about three feet deep at this point, shallow enough for the PCs to wade, too deep for the turkeys to cross. There is a ford down river about 100 yards around a bend. It is currently about six inches deep, shallow enough for the flock to cross. If the PCs check upstream first, about a half mile up there is an old rock slide that changed the course of the river. If they clear some of the debris and roll some boulders into the water, the river flows back into the old river bed. This shifts the river behind the place where the herd currently is being held. The river current at the trail head is about 15 miles per hour. The river is about 30 feet wide, with shallow banks. If the PCs try to block the river here, the river overflows the banks and sweeps away the turkeys. A lower water spell works for one round only, then the river fills in the gap with a splash.

It has been a peaceful day driving the flock closer to town. There has been nothing much of interest besides a few stray foxes to threaten the turkeys. As you come around a bend in the trail, you all realize you have finally made it to the river.

This is the halfway point, according to the farmers' directions.

If any of the PCs inquire, or if they say they are watching the river, they notice that the water is starting to rise. The rain upriver makes the river rise another two feet, making the ford

downstream impassable for the turkeys. If the PCs decide to rest on this side of the stream, they see that the river has noticeably risen by the time they start to move again.

The only way to get the turkeys across then is by shifting the river to the old river bed and crossing at the ford. The PCs could also build a wooden bridge, using large fallen trees. Extra logs from the forest about 200 yards from the river can be found to help stabilize the bridge. It is a little shaky, so roll 3d6 to find out how many turkeys are lost in the crossing.

If the PCs go up river and find the old rock slide, they note the rising of the river—if they haven't already. It takes a combined strength of 30 to move two of the boulders, one blocking the old river bed, another that shifts the river into its new course.

Shifting all the boulders gets somebody thoroughly wet, and when the second boulder lands in the water, it splashes anybody within 20 feet.

> As you walk up river, you notice what appears to be an old rock slide. It seems to have changed the river's path sometime in the past. Upon closer inspection, you see that one boulder is the foundation for keeping the river in its new bed.

Have fun getting the PCs wet, and if anybody is really careless, have him or her get a piece of clothing stuck under a boulder when it is shifted. Using shovels, picks, or other appropriate tools to dig around the boulders makes them easer to shift, a combined strength of 25 is needed.

Smelly Guests

The PCs find an excellent place to camp for the night. There is a ring of hills around a small valley with a spring at the bottom.

> Night is near, and the trail dips down into a small valley, ringed by hills. There is a small spring at the bottom of the valley with a small stream leading from it.
>
> You are all tired from getting the turkeys across the river, and it will be good to get cleaned up and have a peaceful night's sleep.

During the night, a couple of giant wolverines investigate the camp. They are not very hungry, just curious about the strange beings in their territory. If the PCs stay still, the wolverines move on without hurting anything. They just poke their noses into anything not sealed shut.

Have the PCs on watch describe how they are keeping watch. If they are circling the turkeys, they notice the wolverines in camp on their next pass by the camp. If they are staying in camp on watch, the wolverines check out the turkeys first, then walk into camp as the PCs check on the turkeys.

If one PC stays awake in camp, and one is circling the turkeys, they notice the wolverines entering the camp. If the wolverines are attacked, they fight until they lose about three-fourths their hit points, then they try to retreat. The wolverines turn their backs on the PCs who first attacked them and let fly with their musk attacks. Keep in mind that the musk attack is like a cone and may get some of the PCs who are sleeping. The wolverines then attack normally anybody who is in front of them, and spray anybody who attacks from behind. This should leave them a good escape route when the time comes.

After the wolverines are gone, the only way to get rid of the musk stink is by using a *sweetwater* potion. All cloth that was sprayed rots in a matter of hours, and magical cloth and parchment rots if a saving throw vs. acid is failed.

Giant Wolverines (2): THAC0 14; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/2d4; AC 5; HD 4+4; hp 20, 27; MV 15; SA musk spray (20 x 20 x 60 feet, save vs. poison or retreat for one round, lose 50% Strength and Dexterity and blinded for 1d8 hours); SZ M; INT Semi; AL N (E)

Stampede

The PCs travel through a pass with high walls on either side. It is important to know their marching order at this point. The turkeys stampede out of the canyon.

If all of the PCs are behind the herd, the turkeys all charge the rear. If half of the PCs are in front and the other half are in the rear, the herd splits, and half of the turkeys go in either direction. If the PCs are staggered along the herd, the turkeys go wherever they can.

The cause of the stampede is a pair of half-grown mountain lion cubs out chasing rabbits. Once they realize there are humans present, the cubs bolt for shelter, a cave a couple miles away over the mountains. If the PCs are unhappy with the cubs getting away free, let them take parting shots at the fleeing backs of the cubs. But the cubs do not stay around; they are scared also.

> Huge cliffs on either side of the herd make moving the turkeys the easiest it has been since you left home. There is no chance of the birds straying to either side of the trail. You could almost wish that the cliffs lasted all the way into town.
>
> But, all in all, things have been going well. You don't need to hurry the turkeys into town, because with everybody helping, you know you will arrive in town a day early.
>
> As you stop to get your breath for a minute, a sudden disturbance in the herd catches your attention. The turkeys seem to be milling about in some confusion. As you start forward to see what is happening, the entire herd seems to be moving all at once. You can see flashes of the tawny hide of a mountain lion, and then it hits you: The herd is stampeding!

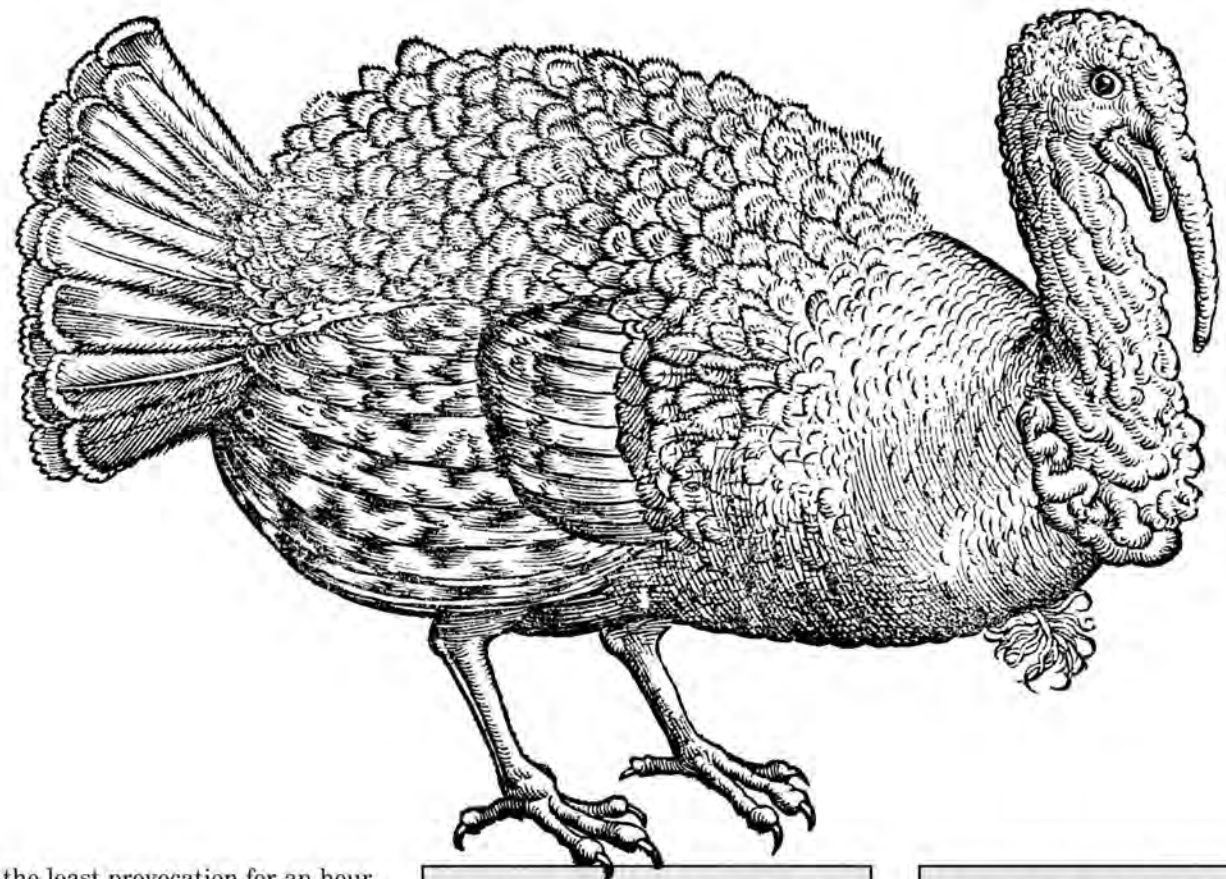
If the PCs immediately take cover behind boulders, trees, or in a cave, they suffer 1d6 damage. If the PCs try to run from the turkeys, or hide in a hole, they suffer 2d6 pecking and trampling damage.

If the PCs hug the cliff walls, they receive 2d4 points damage from wings. If two PCs actually try to turn the herd back on themselves so that they circle, they succeed—but those PCs suffer 2d4 points of damage.

If only one PC tries, he or she will be partially successful, but will still suffer 4d4 points damage.

> As the dust starts to settle, the situation you are in starts to become clear.
>
> The turkeys are scattered all over the canyon. They went running out of the canyon, and are scattering all over the countryside! It's going to take hours to round up the turkeys again.

The turkeys on the cliffs need some encouragement before they descend. Grain on the ground works as before, but having a PC climbing around on the cliff is faster. The turkeys that ran out of the canyon are easily frightened and



bolt at the least provocation for an hour or two. It takes until about dark to gather all of the turkeys back into a herd. If two or more PCs tried to turn the herd, 1d10 turkeys are lost. If only one PC tried, about 1d3 x 10 turkeys were lost.

Lady in Distress

Rose Briarwood is the apprentice of the mage who went to steal the herd from the PCs' employers. She was left here as backup in case the PCs got the herd this far. Rose knows if she kills any of the PCs at this point, she will have a blood feud with the turkey farmers on her hands. Therefore she takes great pains to make friends with the PCs. Rose's only interest is in getting the money from the turkeys as fast as she can, without bloodshed.

Her plan is to get the PCs to trust her by handing out *healing potions* to whoever may need healing, then drug the stew with sleeping herbs at night.

> It has been an uneventful day since the turkey stampede of the day before. It won't be long before you stop for the night. It will be good to finally be in town and have the turkeys at the docks and off your hands.

> The way has been hard but the end is finally within reach. Just one more night on the road. As possible camp sites are being discussed, an unknown voice enters the conversation.
>
> "I know where there is a good camp site for you a couple miles up the trail. There is plenty of grass and a small stream for water."
>
> An attractive young woman steps out from behind a tree. She grins at you and continues "In fact, I'll even help drive the turkeys, if I can have an escort into town."

Rose is looking for a way to stay with the party. She has the following story prepared in case the PCs ask what she is doing in the woods alone:

> "Well, let's just say I made an error in judgment. I went out for a buggy ride with my boyfriend Wilbur.
>
> "It was suppose to be a picnic, but when we got to the picnic grounds, Wilbur had other ideas.
>
> "I decided I would rather walk back to town than have Wilbur escort me back. It was all I could do to preserve my maidenly modesty."

> "And to top it off, I grabbed the wrong sack out of the back of the buggy. This one only contains these five bottles. Do any of you know what they are?"

The bottles are *potions of healing*. Rose gladly gives them to the PCs for an escort back to town.

Rose makes it seem like an offer of gratitude to cook the evening meal. Rose is an excellent chef, and uses herbs from other lands. So while the stew is of gourmet quality (and tainted with sleep-inducing herbs), nobody knows what the ingredients are unless a PC observes her cooking and rolls a successful herbalism or cooking proficiency check at a -6 penalty.

Hidden in her clothes she has an antidote that she takes during a call of nature break. Therefore, Rose eats a hearty meal and keeps track of which PCs are on first watch. The PCs on first watch are the only ones who get a save vs. the sleeping herbs. The PCs who voluntarily went to sleep do not get a saving throw.

The PCs on watch must make a successful save vs. poison at -2 to stay awake. If they make their saves, Rose casts a *sleep* spell from a scroll at them,

making sure all the PCs are asleep. If the PCs don't let Rose join the company, she uses her *ring of silence* and sneaks up on the camp to use the *sleep* scroll. If this happens, she has up to three *sleep* spells on the scroll, plus one she has memorized. She should be able to get in range of all the PCs without their knowledge during the night.

Regardless of what happens, the scroll is used up in this encounter. No matter whether the PCs let Rose join the party, Rose does not let any of her people steal personal possessions from the PCs. The PCs have all of their stuff when they wake up, but the belongings are scattered all over camp. Rose hopes this will give her enough time to get the turkeys sold.

Fight at the Old Oak Corral

When the PCs awaken in the morning, the turkeys are fairly easy to follow. Bird droppings and feathers lead the way. If the PCs pick up the camp carefully, they will have to make a mad dash for town to catch the turkey thieves. If they just pick up what they want, make sure they know everything else is left behind.

> The sun shining into your face awakens you. As you start to open your eyes you have this feeling something is not quite right. Looking around camp, you are simply aghast. It is in shambles. Everything is strewn about like a tornado went through it. It looks like somebody opened up your backpacks, dumped them up-side down, and spread their contents all over camp.
>
> Looking at the rest of your companions in confusion, you notice that they, like you, have been stripped of all clothing down to undergarments. And to top it off, where you left the herd last night, there isn't a single turkey to be seen. Hardly even a feather.

None of the PCs will have trouble following the trail. If anyone asks, the trail points straight at town, and the ship they were supposed to send the turkeys out on leaves at mid-morning (10 o'clock tide). They have about an hour and a half to get to town before the ship sails.

It is four miles to town from the camp. The oaken corrals in which the turkeys are kept before loading are east of the town. There are loading docks connected with the pens, so livestock does not have to enter the town itself. The sea is to the north of the town, while the trail comes out about a mile south of town on top of a hill. There is a square mile cleared area around the town so that herds can go around town fairly easily. Also, the town and docks are visible from the trail.

The PCs can tell that they can't sneak up on the corrals, as the open area around the town includes the corrals. Anybody keeping watch from the corrals will spot a group coming long before they reach the corrals.

Rose and Wilbur are expecting the PCs to show up before all the turkeys are loaded, and they are watching the hills and trees. In the corrals is the turkey herd. The turkey thieves are just finishing loading the turkeys onto the ship when the PCs arrive.

If the PCs scout around first, they will notice that Rose and a strong-looking young man (Wilbur) are near the west fence of the corrals. There are eight men loading the turkeys onto the ships, and they are almost done. Tell the PCs it is customary that animals are not loaded onto the ships until after they have been paid for.

Rose is carrying all the money from the turkey sale (500 gold pieces). Furthermore, the crew that brought in the turkey herd is expected to load them onto the ship. Read the following if the PCs walk calmly up.

> As you walk down the hill to the turkey corrals, Rose and a young man come out to greet you. They seem a little nervous. Behind them are six men who were loading the turkeys onto the boat. They stop about 20 feet away, and look expectantly at you.

Rose wants to delay the PCs with talk as long as possible. She knows that if it comes to a fight she will have to leave town on the ship.

If she can delay the PCs for a couple of minutes, the two men will finish loading the turkeys and be able to come help her. She tries to get the PCs to argue among themselves if at all possible.

If the PCs attack instead of talking, the back row will come forward and protect Rose so that she may cast spells. There is only about a three-feet gap between Rose and the men following her.

If the PCs come charging over the hill, Rose, Wilbur, and four of the men break off immediately to fight the PCs. Two of the thieves wait one round to see if they can backstab somebody, then they join the general fight. The PCs don't know exactly how many people are loading the turkeys unless they ask. The loading crew are not all in place in the corral.

The thieves will be in the following positions if the PCs charge: Wilbur stays beside Rose to help protect her, two sets consisting of two fighters and one thief will be 15 feet ahead of Rose and Wilbur, one set on the left, and the other set on the right. The two remaining thieves are the ones hanging back, and they are 15 feet to either side of Rose and Wilbur.

Rose (M6): THAC0 16; Dmg 1d6; AC 4 (*bracers of defense AC 4*); hp 18; MV 12; AL NE; MI scroll of *sleep, ring of silence* Spells: *reduce, charm person* (x2), *burning hands, darkness 15' radius, blindness, suggestion, spectral force*

Wilbur (F6): THAC0 15, 14 long sword; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 long sword, 1d4 dagger; AC 4 (chain & Dex); MV 12; AL N; MI *long sword +1*

2nd Level Thieves (4): THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6; AC 7; hp 10 each; MV 12; AL CE

2nd Level Fighters (4): THAC0 18; Dmg 1d8; AC 5 (scale & shield); hp 20 each; MV 12; AL CE

If the PCs are losing the battle, their employers show up. Otherwise the turkey farmers will show up just after the battle is completed. If they show up during the battle, the turkey thieves will see them and run for shelter, giving all the PCs parting shots. The only shelter is a stand of trees a half-mile off, on the ship, or in town.

If the thieves make it to town, and the PCs are determined to chase the thieves, let them catch the turkey thieves, but have the guards throw them all in jail overnight for disturbing the peace. If the thieves run for the ship, the sailors will capture them and turn them over to the police.

If the PCs capture the turkey thieves and take them to town, the thieves are recognized, and the PCs and their employers are given the key to the city and are treated like heroes.

❑

The Living Galaxy

Fantasy Fixes for Science-Fiction Gaming's Black Holes

by Roger E. Moore

A lot of space is used here discussing things that Game Masters (GMs) and players of science-fiction role-playing games can do to perk up their campaigns, but it wouldn't hurt to devote a column to talking about things that gamers should avoid in those campaigns.

Some of this advice might look familiar to long-time gamers, but there are plenty of new faces around every year, and it never hurts to refresh one's memory.

Oddly enough, much of the helpful advice for avoiding mistakes in playing science-fiction games can be drawn from an unexpected source: TSR's AD&D® game products! With that scary thought, we take our column out to the black holes of science-fiction gaming and see how close we can come to the edge before we fall in.

A word of apology first. In each of the following cases, I tend to overstate the GM's errors to clarify the problems involved. I love stereotypes because worst-case scenarios are the most instructive.

However, it is entirely possible that a conscientious GM will sometimes stray into Monty Haulism, Killer GMism, or Supernova Bobism. Such drifting is, in fact, completely unavoidable. Worse yet, you can be led into these conditions by officially approved (but badly playtested) rules and modules.

All of this has happened to me, and I couldn't count the times I've wanted to bang my head against a wall because my role-playing campaign had gone out of whack for one reason or another.

Don't lose heart. All campaigns drift in and out of balance because they are dynamic, ever-shifting, alive. Don't ever be eager to label yourself and your campaign as failures.

Always be alert to trouble, and always be prepared to adjust things to keep the game running on its more-or-less even keel. Read, consider, and (if you think it necessary) fix. And enjoy the stereotypes. We've all met them, and we may as well learn from their mistakes.

The 25th Century Monty Haul

One of the most destructive courses for a GM to take in running a science-fiction campaign is to play Monty Haul. Fantasy-game GMs are familiar with this condition, named for Monty Hall, the host of the old TV giveaway game show, "Let's Make a Deal." Monty Haulism is simply granting the player characters such extraordinary personal powers and devices, without providing counterbalancing factors in the campaign. Such campaigns cease to challenge the players. The end result is boredom and campaign collapse from player dropout, all because the GM secretly wanted to be loved.

In fantasy games, this situation is easily recognized from the appearance of technological devices, magical artifacts, inflated personal statistics, deity-slaying, and endless wishes. In science-fiction games, the condition is hard to diagnose and often difficult to avoid. If you gave a group of fantasy adventurers a nuclear-powered tank, that's Monty Haulism.

If you gave the same nuclear tank to a group of mercenaries in FASA's *BattleTech* campaign, you might be cheating the players. After all, the PCs will be facing a horde of gigantic, nuclear-armed robots that could turn that tank into smoking metal confetti in mere seconds, killing all the PCs. To prevent this and balance the campaign, every mercenary needs his *own* gigantic nuclear-armed robot or tank.

Obviously, the yardstick used to measure campaign balance in fantasy games doesn't apply to science-fiction ones. In some science-fiction campaigns, the PCs can start the game owning a starship, with an array of personal laser weapons that would leave most dungeons smoking ruins. But the campaign is balanced because lots of other people have starships and laser weapons, too.

It's the old Cold War principle of M.A.D., "mutually assured destruction." Everyone has the same sort of firepower at his or her disposal. (As the saying went in America's Old West: "God made men, but Colonel Colt made them equal.") The PCs, of course, don't always have as much firepower as the villains do, and from that inequality comes a good and challenging campaign.

That yardstick for Monty Haulism also varies from game to game, ruining all chances for establishing cross-game consistency. A nuclear tank is nothing much in a *BattleTech* game, but it is a high prize in TSR's GAMMA WORLD® game. The spell books that no one would bother stealing from a burned-out mage in FASA's *Shadowrun* campaign are treasures beyond value in GDW's no-magic *Traveller: The New Era* setting (assuming that the GM lets such magic work, of course). Conversely, a PGMP-12 plasma gun that's a relic in a firefight in the latter game might be a campaign killer in the former. ("Whoa, dude, you just set fire to a whole city block!")

Whenever you introduce a new and powerful tool, weapon, or character ability into your campaign, you must always have a limiting, balancing element. Always. Checks and balances keep the campaign ship afloat. The GM who wants only to please the players with giveaways is lost.

Psionic and magical powers can lead to the worst problems. GDW's *Traveller: The New Era* game and its predecessors allow for the possibility that characters can gain psionics; FASA's *Shadowrun* allows for characters using magic. A careless GM using either game can throw a campaign out the window with a few simple strokes of the pencil by granting psionic powers or magical devices to characters at a whim, without a look at their full effects.

For example, a GM using the new *Traveller* game decides to allow for psionic characters, and he lets all of the PCs have teleportation, without any particular restrictions. The GM has been reading *The Stars My Destination*, a classic SF novel by Alfred Bester, in which most of humanity gains teleporting abilities, and the GM thinks the idea is cool. However, the GM hasn't made the proper adjustments to the campaign to balance this. (The prologue to Bester's book details some of the horrifying situations that arose because teleportation became so common: the spread of

diseases and pests, the collapse of transportation industries, fantastic crime waves, police repression, etc.)

The players are overjoyed at their characters' new powers—and they employ them at every turn. Characters steal and murder with impunity. They thumb their noses at police and armies. What was fun at first quickly whirls out of control. When the GM belatedly realizes the campaign is ruined, he tries to bring it back into line by applying the restrictions placed in teleportation as given in the *Traveller: TNE* rules book (pages 256-257).

The players resent such restrictions, rightly seeing them as arbitrary and unrealistic. After all, why weren't such restrictions in place from the start of the game? Then the players would have acted with much more restraint and forethought. Too late now!

Mental powers have long been a part of science-fiction novels. Alfred Bester also wrote *The Demolished Man*, about a detective in a telepathic human civilization, and James H. Schmitz explored telepathy on a personal and alien level with *The Universe Against Her*. Larry Niven had several characters with powerful mental abilities in his Known Space series (see *The Long Arm of Gil Hamilton* and *A Gift from Earth*).

However, what a character can get away with in a novel is not what a character can get away with in a role-playing game. A person who can become effectively invisible, as could the hero of *A Gift from Earth*, has terrific power. Invisibility is a tough card to beat, even in fantasy campaigns, without the appearance of spells or devices allowing others to see invisible objects, or the use of tricks like fighting in fog or on surfaces that reveal invisible opponents (floured floors, snow, mud, water, etc.). And try to imagine the campaign effects if one or more telepathic PCs can read minds at will without trouble. Why should a GM give power like this away and guarantee trouble?

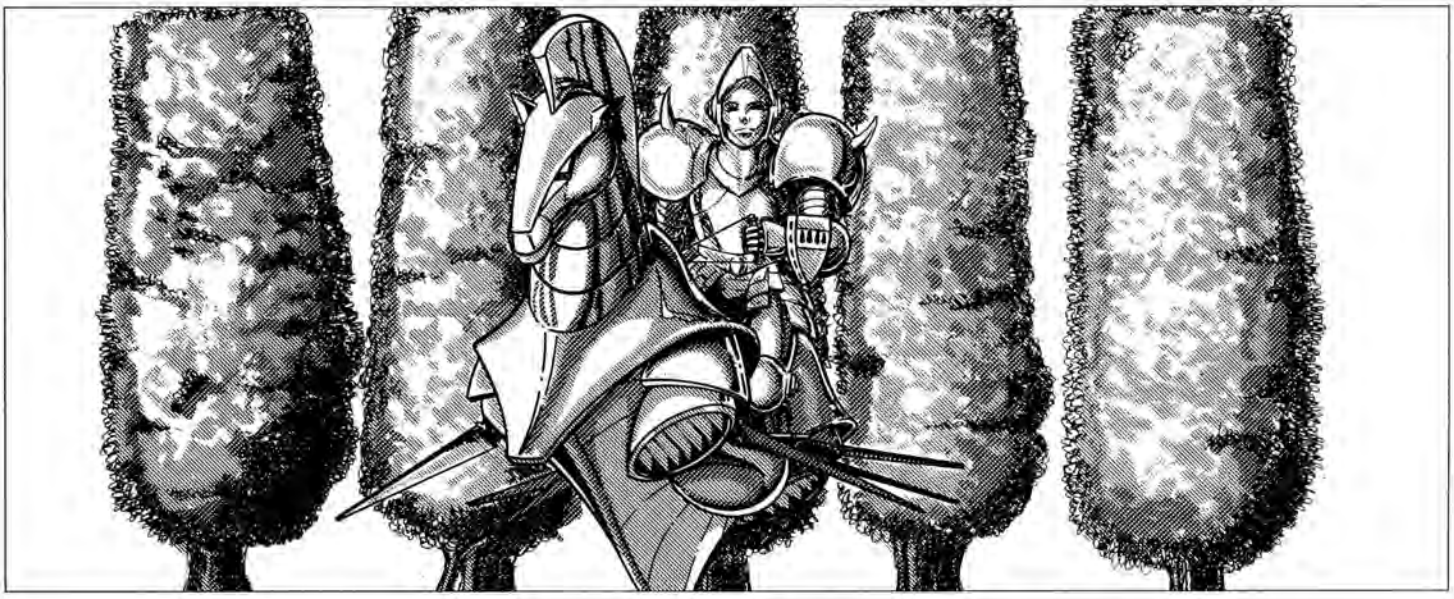
If you want to introduce powerful personal abilities like invisibility, teleportation, invulnerability, vampirism, regeneration, poisonous touch, super-speed, powerful weaponry, and so on, take a few days to consider the consequences if certain players were to abuse those powers to the absolute extreme. Look at how those powers will benefit both legal and criminal acts. If you place White Wolf's *Vampire: The Masquerade* characters in a *Shadowrun*-style campaign, you can bet the vampire PCs will use their talents to the limit in whatever endeavors they undertake.

This is not meant to prevent a clever, creative GM from starting a campaign in which the PCs are extraordinary in some way. If you really want to have vampire characters in your *Traveller* campaign, then by all means do it. It might be a blast. If you want telepathic PCs in *Star Trek: The RPG*, or wizards in a BUGHUNTERS™ game, or powered armor and plasma guns in a TOP SECRET/S.I.® game, go for it. Just be sure you adjust the campaign to handle it.

Maybe the use of psionics or magic draws the attention of paranormal parasites or carnivores, like the cerebral parasites and thought eaters of the AD&D game, or the monstrous demonic entities of GW's *Warhammer: 40,000* universe.

Maybe special police or military forces have devices or powers to track down those who use "mind control" or "evil magic." Maybe the powers won't work on call, like the psionic abilities in the AD&D *Complete Psionics Handbook*, which work only after a power check is made (with a chance for disastrous failure). Maybe the powers won't work reliably, leading to off-target teleportation (again, as per the AD&D game's *teleport* spell) or their use can be detected by electronic surveillance equipment (invisible characters might still emit heat or sound). Telepathy might require silence and great concentration, and translation of foreign-language thoughts might be difficult at best. And don't holy water, garlic, mirrors, and wooden stakes make vampires nervous?

With technological devices, allow for limited charges for the device, or disastrous side effects when used or misused. Think about the horrors that the *Rod of Seven Parts* can inflict on careless adventurers in the AD&D game, then apply the same reasoning to your high-tech game. Many technological treasures in the GAMMA WORLD game are limited by their unfamiliarity, their short battery lives, and their remarkable ability to kill everyone close to them in grotesque ways if mishandled by the ignorant.



In the process of correcting or balancing the addition of extraordinary weaponry, mental abilities, and so on, try to avoid setting up an arms race. It is common for GMs whose groups contain heavily armed adventurers to ensure that the foes they fight are even more heavily armed. However, if the PCs defeat their foes, they will take their foes' weapons and be even more heavily armed. The arms race soars up and out of control.

To control an arms race, use the "kobold solution" from the AD&D game (named after an editorial I wrote for DRAGON® Magazine issue #127, "Tucker's kobolds"). Kobolds are the weakest of all humanoids in the AD&D game, but a clever Dungeon Master can turn them into nightmares by having them use flaming oil grenades, poison, ambushes, minor potions, sabotage, killing traps, and other "dirty" tactics. Magical weapons? Not a one. The application to every sort of SF game should be obvious: Make the regular encounters as dangerous and challenging as possible by having them use their brains. This is actually an old technique that's been detailed in many places, but it is greatly underused. (A future column might detail such tactics.)

As a last suggestion, if you love giving super-powers to PCs that much, you might be better off playing a superhero game and forgetting about science fiction altogether. It's better to change than disappoint. Take your pick.

Killer GMs & Supernova Bob

The GM whose style is the opposite of Monty Haul is the Killer GM, who thrives on ineffective PCs with no or few adventure survivors. The Killer GM has a close relative that I call Supernova Bob. They both spell trouble.

Fantasy campaigns are full of terrible events: wars, plagues, undead hordes, avatars fighting, etc. The Killer GM further stacks the deck by deliberately underpowering the PCs and overpowering the opposition, it being his intention to see some, most, or all of the PCs kick the bucket in the course of an evening's play. Some GMs do this out of a belief that this is required for a game to be "exciting," with an equally strong belief that the GM's control over the game must be absolute. Some GMs do it because they like to kill characters (and some keep score). The Killer GM is on a power trip and wants to be feared.

Supernova Bob, however, doesn't necessarily want any of the PCs to die during an adventure; he might even go to considerable lengths to prevent it. But his control over the game is absolute, and his style of play does not allow for input from the players, who are there only to appreciate how wonderful, clever, and mind-boggling the campaign is. Bob's on a power trip, too, but he wants a live audience who will fear and love him. (After all, he kept everyone's character alive.)

Like the Killer GM, Supernova Bob is very careful about limiting the powers and equipment that the PCs have—not that it matters an iota, because the PCs are essentially helpless pawns in the GM's freak show.

An example will suffice to show the difference between a Killer GM and Supernova Bob in a science-fiction game. In the former's campaign, a group of adventurers enters an ancient, wrecked starship in deep space. In five minutes, they are attacked by brain-eating space octopi while jagged, unseen bits of metal tear at their spacesuits and radiation fries them. "It was a trap! You should have been more careful and just sent a scout or robot in first," he says when the players complain.

In the latter's campaign, the same group enters the same space wreck, but the PCs are then mind-controlled by a godlike entity that makes them take the ship through a space warp like the one in the monolith in *2001: A Space Odyssey* until they reach the heart of the galaxy where the PCs are imprisoned by other godlike entities who sneer at the PCs and compare them to ants but free the PCs out of pity after turning their equipment into useless slag and giving them permanent, glow-in-the-dark tattoos on their foreheads that spell out the word "Idiot!" in 697 galactic languages.

"You can't believe the power of these beings!" cries Bob, overcome with his vision of these space bullies and irritated that the players don't appreciate that vision, too. "Don't shoot them! You can't stop them with lasers! They're too powerful!"

If players in your campaign feel they are having too rough a go of it, look for ways to alter your adventures so that the PCs are more effective and have greater control over their lives. Let the PCs get involved in the action and have a chance to win.

Look at the wrecked starship example. A Killer GM could soften the blow by allowing the PCs to detect, early on, the enormous amounts of radiation pouring out of the hulk's damaged star drives. The PCs might send over a robot (which will be ignored by the carnivorous aliens aboard the hulk), or they might put on armored suits and come over themselves. With proper lighting, they can see jagged metal wreckage in the ship and at least try to avoid it; if one or more PCs get killed by a bad die roll, the group can accept the loss more easily than if no one had a chance to see the trouble coming.

As for the alien octopi, they can still surprise the PCs (what's an adventure without surprises?), but the PCs should have some chance to strike back or flee once the attack has begun.

As for our Supernova Bob, there's nothing innately wrong with having the PCs being captured by vastly superior alien intelligences. (This sort of thing happens on "Star Trek" all the time.) But, as on "Star Trek," the PCs should have some logical, acceptable ways of trying to communicate with, bargain with, fight, or escape from the aliens. Maybe the aliens are limited, being only thought creatures who put up illusions, and the PCs need only realize they can't trust their senses. Maybe the aliens are careless (humans certainly are) and have unknowingly left various avenues for their subjects to escape and arm themselves.

Regarding this last possibility, I like to think of a situation in which an animal in a laboratory would try to escape from becoming an experimental subject. The various *Planet of the Apes* movies and Disney's *The Secret of NIMH* (and its predecessor, the entertaining children's story *Mrs. Frisby & the Rats of Nimh*, by Robert C. O'Brien) are useful models here. If you want to run a scenario like this, imagine for a moment that you are a chimpanzee—a very smart one—and that you are stuck in a research lab. How would you get out? Is there more than one way? Apply the results of your thought problem to the scenario you craft.

There's nothing particularly wrong with wanting to be a GM who's both feared and loved a little. It's the way you go about it that makes a difference. Players want power, but they want to earn it, and they want to be entertained as well as challenged. If you can give them that, you've really got something.

❑

Weasel Games

Streaking Competitively

by Lester Smith

I've often wondered at the competitive streak in human beings. Sure, it is an important survival trait for a species vying against others in Nature's food chain. But in our synthetic world of competing fast-food chains, that contentiousness is sometimes inflated to ridiculous proportions.

Some of our race's more gentle members claim that competition is not an innate element of human nature, but rather something imparted by a violent society. But I'm not convinced. As far as the question of "nature versus nurture" is concerned regarding competitiveness, I lean pretty firmly toward "nature" as the source. In part, that attitude is due (as I've mentioned in a previous article) to the fact that some of our teeth are designed for tearing meat, and that a few essential proteins are difficult to acquire from a diet of plants.

Biologically, then, we bear evidence of our ancestry; our forebears chased, killed, and ate animals, an image of competition in its most primal form. Also, I think it is telling that the Western world's free market economy—which depends upon competition as its driving force—continues to thrive while non-competitive models collapse under the weight of their own lethargy.

My opinion is further firmed by accounts of pacifists who have tried to keep their sons away from "war toys," only to find them pointing sticks at friends and hollering "Pow! Pow!"

However, modern society depends upon cooperation as well. (After all, some of our teeth are designed for grinding plants, too, typical of herd animals.) We rely upon one another to fill specific needs, and develop specialists to supply food, water, electricity, medical care—and even entertainment. But paradoxically, the nature of that entertainment is often competitive. Consider popular sports, for example. Basketball, football, baseball, hockey, car racing, all involve human-to-human competition. Even in such sports as mountain climbing, in which climbers are apparently battling the rock face itself, and the elements of nature, the goal is to beat an earlier record for speed or height, in other words, to do better than the individual who holds that record—to "best" that person, if you will.

Given our heritage as both plant- and meat-eaters—as both competers and cooperators—it shouldn't be surprising that there is some difference of opinion over just how competitive a game ought to be. My spouse, for example, enjoys games in which cooperation plays a large part, and despises games that pit individuals against one another, while I generally prefer the thrill of "dog-eat-dog" individual competition, and find cooperative games enjoyable only as an occasional break from savagery. The fact that both sorts of games continue to be produced says that there are lots of people out there from each perspective, and I certainly have a number of friends in each camp.

Largely though, I think it is more a question of degree than of pure dichotomy. The team games my spouse prefers give her the satisfying feeling of working together, but she is still involved in a competition. And while I enjoy contests of individual prowess, I prefer to play things that move quickly, allowing several games to be played in one session, so that everyone has a good chance of going home having won at least once.

What's more, I enjoy watching people grow and learn from the games they play. I have a friend who used to become so irritated when the dice seemed to be against him that he would often throw them across the room. But as time passed, he steadily gained control over that irritation, and I am positive that it mirrored the growth of patience in his daily life. I have learned a few lessons along that line myself, lessons about not taking things too seriously, and about putting competition into perspective.

Perhaps the best example in my case involves a session of the *Chill: Black Morn Manor* board game. In this game, players investigate a haunted house, seeking to destroy the evil master lurking there. The game is designed in such a way that the master changes from session to session, so each play involves solving the mystery of what sort of creature the master is, what powers are at its disposal, and what item is required to defeat it. To set up the mystery, the game starts one player in the role of a minion of the master, and that person constructs the event deck to reflect the particular creature to be defeated. Other players take the roles of envoys of SAVE, a secret society which combats the supernatural.

Over the course of play, envoys who lose all their "willpower" become minions, while minions can be "saved" from their evil enslavement, thereby joining the ranks of the envoys. Envoys win the game cooperatively, by together defeating the master; minions can only win individually, by being the one who carries off the board the one item that is capable of defeating the master.

In this particular session, I began the game as the minion, and my spouse and a close friend were envoys. As play progressed, they managed to rescue me from the master's dominance. And yet—I am ashamed to admit—I would not tell them who the master was. My reasoning was that the object necessary for destroying the master had not yet showed, and if, in the course of play, I became a minion again, I wanted the edge. It was a wargamer's way of thinking, keeping the upper hand, covering all options. But my spouse and friend were incredulous at my attitude—and then disgusted. As things turned out, I did end up a minion once again, and with the edge of having kept the master's identity secret, I won the game.

But it was a hollow victory. As I thought things over during the next several days, I came to see that from my spouse's and friend's perspective I had violated the spirit of the game. A real person, having been rescued from a monstrous master's control, would have blabbed everything. Considering that, only a weasel player would refuse to do so in the game.

Mea culpa. Sometimes the weasel instinct runs too strong. I've definitely benefited from the experience, gaining new insights into what strings different games pluck in the human psyche. ❑

Elminster's Everwinking Eye

Turmish Customers and Festivals

by Ed Greenwood

. . . And so at last we came to Turmish, and the lamps were lit, twinkling through the trees, and we were welcome, with warm hearth-couches waiting for us.
—Holdryn Nalaster, merchant of Suzail
A Merchant's Musings
Year of the Bright Blade

Customs of Turmish

You've already been introduced to the Turmishan custom of the guest-dish, wherein a guest brings food to his host's table. The upturned human skull full of snails is the legendary form of the dish (celebrated in several old ballads), and purportedly dates from when humans were fighting lizard men for control of swampy areas in The Halondar . . . when the lizard men came to a peace-pact feast, it was the guest-dish they brought (much to the horror of their hosts).

Any food is acceptable; most common with well-to-do Turmishans are bottles of good or homemade wine—or perhaps flavored bread made in their own village or household (cheese and nut breads are widely made in Turmish). Among poorer folk, meat is most highly prized—even squirrels slain with a sling.

Root Cellars

It is also customary among folk who dwell in Turmish to dig out root cellars somewhere on or near their land. No food is wasted; everything edible is pickled, salted, dried, smoked, or fermented, and stored against the harsh winters that sometimes sweep down, making travel and trade impossible for months, and slaying livestock out in the open.

More than one fugitive, fleeing across Turmish, has found these everpresent cellars to be ideal hideaways—though local militia units and Ghost Sword members tend to know where the cellars are, and check them.

Pets, Game, and Domesticated Animals

Dogs are almost unknown in Turmish, and house pets are few (though many folk feed fish in nearby streams, or scatter grain in winter for the birds). The forests keep predators plentiful and herd animals to a minimum, though there were once wild Turmish ponies (on the few plains in the land, south of The Mountains of the Alaoreum, in the mouth of the Perloush; the surviving ponies are now bred in captive herds in the Perloush itself).

The use of mules and small oxen is common on Turmishan farms, and trained Perloushan ponies are also numerous. Grouse, pheasant, ducks, and the like are carefully given nesting areas (and sometimes even reared on grain), but with the countrywide skill at archery, the keeping of barnyard fowl is rare. Turmishans prefer to fill their larders during "the fall flights," bringing down fowl on the wing with their quick marksmanship. The folk of Turmish do take pride in skill at archery.

The Turmishan View

Most Turmishans care little about wealth and pay attention to the fashions of the Inner Sea only insofar as they laugh at them when visitors wear something especially ridiculous, or when a minstrel mocks what is said, or worn, or done in Sembia, Chessenta, or the cities around the Lake of Steam. Status is meaningless to most native Turmishans; everyone is judged on his or her own merits, and power and privilege are nearly unknown.

Turmishans believe everyone should pay attention to the cycles of nature (such as the changing moon and the signs of the seasons). For this reason, Turmishans always seem to be aware of the date . . . and the times of regular events, such as priestly calendar rituals—Dancing Night (described in issue #98) for example. Many Turmishans seem to have an uncanny ability to know how much time has passed in a day, even when they can't see the sun.

Living close to the land keeps most Turmishans appreciative of healthiness more than beauty, but with a preference for natural views—of the countryside or shapely bodies—over paintings or sculpture. Practicality (in hot weather, even nudity) is valued over looks and fashion . . . except in Alaghôn, which cleaves more closely to the norm for human cities around the Sea of Fallen Stars. A "class" structure—or at least haughtiness and a social "pecking order" of the citizenry having differing status—exists in Alaghôn, but not really anywhere else in Turmish (something visitors find very hard to understand . . . or believe).

There are two Turmishan customs that travelers find very welcome: the habit of digging signposted, free-for-all-to-use wells (in roofed enclosures equipped with candle-lamps for use in darkness) along the main road linking Alaghôn to Hlondeth, and the building of guesthouses.

The wells are inspected and maintained (largely a job of replenishing the supplies of candles) by the militia patrols—but the guesthouses are the work of Turmishans all across the land.

Turmishan Guesthouses

Found here and there along the network of wandering lanes that crisscross the realm, guesthouses are tree-sheltered cabins with chimneys and plentiful firewood. Usually large enough to shelter five or six laden travelers (and sometimes to give their mounts a roofed-over hay-pen), these structures are built—often in whimsical style or with amusing ornamentations—by the landowners whose land they stand on.

Guesthouses serve to shelter travelers. For small parties or lone travelers, they offer delightful accommodation . . . and in summer months, encourage some

jobless folk from the crowded Vilhon Reach to travel around Turmish, seeing the sights. Local militias know where every guesthouse is, of course—and can arrive swiftly at any sign of trouble.

Travelers emboldened by such hospitality are warned that more than one window or stable door in Turmish has been fixed with sleep-needle traps.

Sleep-Needle Traps

Developed by the apothecary Phindal of Gildenglade, these traps are hidden in locks, doorframes, and other handholds, and consist of thorns dipped in a clear, waxy oil that dries to a soft, crumbly coating good for 1d4+1 exposures.

Victims of the first two exposures must save vs. poison at -2; victims of the third at -1, victims of the fourth and fifth at par, with a Dexterity check to avoid the trap if a being knows something is present, and an Intelligence check to spot and automatically avoid it if the being is actively looking for traps.

Anyone who strikes a sleep-needle with any exposed flesh and saves is unaffected; if the save fails, the victim falls unconscious at the end of the same round, and remains so until 1d4+1 turns have passed (or until a *neutralize poison* is administered).

Festivals

Folk in Turmish celebrate many local harvest occasions, religious observances, and individual rituals, but besides the "standard" festival days of The Calendar of Harptos (which Turmish follows), there are only two countrywide festivals: The Feast of the Moon and The Reign of Misrule.

The Feast of the Moon takes place at Highsummer: that is, on the night of the first full moon after Midsummer. It is a night of drinking, dancing, and debauched revelry that lasts the whole night through, including moonlit chases through the woods, wild singing, and much eating and drinking. Tradition demands that lovers find each other in a place in Turmish strange to them . . . in other words, they must journey separately to meet at an agreed-upon trysting-place neither of them has ever been to before. Popular sites are the shores of (and the grassy hilltops overlooking) The Lake of Drifting Stars, just north of Gildenglade; Evenstar Vale, west of Alaghôn; Starfall Stream Pool at the head of The Perloush; the reputedly haunted height of Bare Bones Hill just east of The Hlondar; and Faerie Well. The intent of the Feast is to indulge in carefree partying—but the militias are extra vigilant that night, to ensure that murder, theft, and overdangerous pranks are not carried out under cover of the nightlong mayhem.

The Reign of Misrule follows Higharvestide by a tenday. It lasts from dawn to dusk—and during this time everyone is allowed to act out of character without reprisal—so long as they do not cause death or destruction. Citizens are allowed to break the rules of their faith, guild, profession, or self-imposed promises and behavior, on this one day only—so you may see paladins being rude and dishonest, priests under vows of poverty stealing things, and so on.

The day is meant as a release, and many Turmishans spend it screaming out guilty secrets in a sort of public confession, or taking out pent-up aggressions on hated rivals, disagreeable neighbors or family members.

It is a crime to speak openly of anything a citizen of Turmish says or does during the Reign, once it is over . . . and the Free Council of Alaghôn never meets on this day.

Turmishan News & Rumors

◆ The mysterious "Cinammon Dragon" has been seen again. First sighted (or at least, first brought to public attention) when the houseboat of the mage Orlevan Blackhammer was destroyed in the harbor of Alaghôn, this rare, long-tailed wyrm is cinammon brown in color and spits out forked lightning when aroused. It commands some powerful magic and is still sought by wizards and alchemists.

This time, the elusive wyrm was seen—several times, and by different folk—in the peaks west of The Perloush, in the heart of the Orsraun Mountains. Some sages (and many normal folk) believe it lairs there, and so has escaped attention for so long. Opinions are divided on what it eats—though most wizards believe it can shape change and may spend a lot of time grazing in horseform—or even in human guise, dwelling undetected among the folk of Turmish!

◆ Word is spreading in Sembia of a Turmishan merchant selling perfume that is deadly poisonous. Many who apply it to their skins die soon afterward, though others claim that it makes their skin so tough (yet still supple) that it can turn swordpoints and daggers aside! Sembian interests have hired adventuring bands to try to capture the merchant or at least a substantial stock of the perfume, which certain mages of that realm want to examine.

◆ Darbrent Amclara, a wizard of Alaghôn, claims to have discovered a shielding spell that redirects all magic elsewhere, to places chosen by the shielded being (who need not be a mage). This spell received a public testing when Darbrent strolled into a Red Wizard's citadel and destroyed it simply by turning all the magics hurled against him at the structure and its guardians. The Red Wizards are known to be hunting Darbrent—several have dropped disguises deep in Turmish to attack mages they mistakenly believed Darbrent—and he seems to have either been destroyed or gone into hiding.

The Free Council of Alaghôn has issued a proclamation, sent to Thay on a fast merchant caravel, disclaiming all responsibility for the actions of Darbrent—and warning Thay that repeated attacks on its citizens will be answered by "might of magic that is certain to surprise even the most arrogant Red Wizard."

Thay has not reacted publicly to the communication and may indeed simply ignore it, but most folk around The Sea of Fallen Stars think Turmishans are in for an interesting time in the months ahead.

Some folk speculate that wizards on (or working behind the seats of) the Free Council are seeking deliberately to lure Red Wizards to Turmish . . . perhaps into traps.

Others just think the Council has taken collective leave of its senses. Almost all are amused and a little awed that someone would dare to deliver such a rebuke to the dreaded Red Wizards—and are making sure they have no overlarge investments in Turmish, in case it soon becomes a land of barren devastation. Others remind such pessimists that Turmish has delivered up sharp surprises before.

That's all for the nonce; I'm running out of stuff to pour into Elminster and am in need of some sleep. He'll probably leave if I start to snore. Back to more Realmslore next time—and to give you a treasure tour of Turmish.

❑

War Machines

The RMV for the GAMMA WORLD® Game

by slade

The *Gamma Knights* accessory introduced GAMMA WORLD® game players to powered armor. Just when the average Gamma Terran thought it was safe to peek out the window, the *Treasures of the Ancients* showed the next step in the war-machine evolution: the Robotic Motorized Vehicle (RMV).

A picture of the Excelsior Class RMV appeared at the bottom center of the bound-in poster map, but no data was provided. This details the Excelsior as well as three other monstrous machines of pre-holocaust destruction. With a little work, these creations can be used in other science fiction games.

The RMV looks like a cross between a powered suit of armor and a bipedal robotic unit. The unit has a capsule in the chest, from where the occupant controls the vehicle's actions. Each RMV is more than five meters tall, making them useless as standard powered armor. The large frame also makes them useless in the close quarters of normal adventuring. However, RMVs are useful as war machines against powerful foes or large groups of enemies. And those who possess these machines are truly the greatest of Gamma Knights.

Slots

Like powered armor, the features of an RMV are determined by the number of slots available to it. Slots are simply access junctures that allow characters to install options onto the RMV. The slots available is determined by its frame size. The larger the frame, the more slots.

An item, or option, grafted onto the RMV requires a set number of slots, usually one to four. Each RMV takes these total slots and distributes them among seven general locations: helmet, left arm, right arm, front plate, back plate, left leg, and right leg. Items must be in one section of the armor and not spread to two or more different locations. In other words, two of the eight-slots of the cloaking device cannot be placed in the left arm while the remaining six are used in the front plate.

Table 1 below details the number of slots available to the four known RMVs. For the distribution, refer to the individual RMV write ups that follow.

Table 1: Slots Available

RMV Class	Height	Slots
Ambassador	5.5 m	180
Excelsior	5.0 m	150
Executioner	6.0 m	210
Supervisory	6.5 m	250

Please note that the number of slots in an RMV determines now much and where equipment can be mounted in that vehicle. Extension plates increase the number of slots available. Many items occupy more than one slot. To operate, an item needs one unit of energy per slot. This energy is provided by a power coupling and is transmitted through a hot plate. One hot plate is needed per item, regardless of its energy requirements.

Extension Plates

All of the extension plates listed in the *Gamma Knights* supplement are usable with the RMV, but their usefulness is doubtful (adding an EPx000-A12 to a supervisory Class RMV adds less than 0.50% to the overall power grid—a waste of resources). Therefore, a set usable only on the RMV are listed below. The table below shows the newer, more powerful Extension Plates. Placement is abbreviated as follows: Helmet (H), Arm (A), Right Arm (RA), Left Arm (LA), Front (F), Front Plate (FP), Back (B), Back Plate (BP), Left Leg (LL), Right Leg (RL).

Table RTO-2: Extension Plates

Part #	Uses	Gives	Placement
EPxA1-R	4	10	B, L, A, F
EPxA2-V	4	13	B, L
EPxA3-E	4	16	B, L
EPxA4-M	4	20	B
EPxA5-V	4	25	B
EPxA6-M	4	30	B
EPxA7-R	4	35	B

When an extension plate is damaged, it loses its ability to provide energy, and all systems attached to the damaged plate are depowered instantly. The depowered equipment cannot be used until the extension plate is repaired, replaced, or the equipment is placed elsewhere on the RMV.

Power Couplings

The power couplings option is available in every RMV. They are similar to the power supplies used in powered armor. The only difference is that powered armor does not have the capability to have parallel clusters of power units (explained below).

Also known as QPCs (Quantum Power Couplings), these ancient devices give the vehicle a virtually inexhaustible power supply by "burning" ambient air molecules. Each QPC gives the RMV the ability to keep eight slots functioning indefinitely. All other power-using attachments must be turned off. Attempting to run more than the maximum possible slots causes the whole vehicle to shut down for one full combat round, during which the occupant must readjust the power usage to bring it within limitations. The vehicle powers up again when this is done.

Table 3: Power Couplings

QPCs	Slots	Power	Placement
1	8	8	Any
2	16	16	Any
3	24	24	Any
4	32	32	Any

From Table 3, it is apparent that each slot fitted with a QPC can power one slot fitted with a weapon or other system. One-half of the slots of any RMV should be dedicated to QPCs if the occupant wants to have every system functioning at once.

In practice, power can be juggled from system to system, reducing the need for QPCs. Few standard RMVs spend half of their slots on power.

Table 4 shows the use of parallel cluster QPCs. When the parallel cluster option is initiated in the RMV, two QPC units are connected through a fitted link that basically turns the QPC into a single double-strength QPC.

Table 4: Parallel-Clustered Power Couplings

QPCs	Slots	Power	Location
1+1	8	16	Any
2+2	16	32	FP, RP
3+3	24	48	FP, RP
4+4	32	64	FP, RP

Hot Plate Hook-ups

Unlike powered armor, the occupant of the RMV is unable to use standard weapons and devices through the RMV's hands—the hands are far too powerful. There are a few devices, however, specifically designed for the RMV's use. These are detailed later.

Sensor Options

Table 5 depicts the sensor systems that can be installed on the RMV. For a full description of the sensor's function, see the *Gamma Knights* boxed set.

Any number of sensors can run at once. Generally, all RMV occupants (and Gamma Knights alike) run all the sensors they can to gain as many benefits as they can. The player must pick one of the operating sensors as the primary sensors; the player gains full benefits from this sensor. All other sensors that are put on-line grant the player an additional +1 THAC bonus.

Table 5: Sensor Types

Sensor	Slots	THAC+	Range
Energy-use	**1**	**+31**	**1 km**
Eye-movement	**1**	**+8**	**LOS2**
Infrared	**1**	**+21**	**200 m**
Life	**1**	**+31**	**200 m**
Motion	**1**	**+2**	**600 m**
Radar	**1**	**+31**	**1 km**
Radiation	**1**	**+4**	**1 km**
Sound	**1**	**+2**	**300 m**
2-way Radio	**1**	**+0**	**Worldwide**
Ultraviolet	**1**	**+31**	**350 m**
Underwater	**13**	**(+4)**	**n/a**
Visual	**1**	**+0**	**1 km**

The underwater sensor is a program that can be attached to two other sensors. It counters the -4 THAC penalty of fighting underwater.

Table 6: Defensive Options

Defensive Option	Slots	Defensive Option	Slots
Autosurgeon	2	Capsule Sealant	1
Cloaking Device	8	Computer Scrambler	3
Ejection System	6	EMP Generator	6
Energy-Emission Filter*	3	IR Absorption	2
Life Support System	2	Light Filter	1
Medikit	1	Radar Scrambler	1
Radio Scrambler	2	Repair Servos	4
Self-Destruct Mechanism	1	Silencer	2
Smoke Generator	1	Sound Filter	1
UV Absorption	1	Water Circulation	1

* This option is automatic on all RMVs—a benefit from their duralloy construction.

When fighting underwater (at any depth), the RMV occupant suffers a -4 THAC penalty. This penalty can be offset by installing the underwater sensor program. Unfortunately, only two sensors can be used with each under-water sensor program. The RMV can be installed with multiple underwater programs—each taking one slot.

Defensive Options

Defensive options are generally ECM (electronic counter measures) and other systems that assist the occupant "behind the scene." Table 6 above shows the options that can be added to all RMVs. These systems are detailed in the *Gamma Knights* boxed set, but the new systems are detailed here. The armor for the RMV is strong enough to withstand many attacks without damage, but it is always better to avoid being hit.

Capsule Sealant: Especially beneficial in hostile environments like outer space, deep water, or in the presence of toxic gases, poisons, or disease, capsule sealant is designed to seal any breach the occupant capsule may be subjected to. By spurting a ferrous foam into the breach, the capsule is instantly sealed. This happens automatically, even if the occupant is unconscious. The only two instances this system does not function is when the occupant is trying to vacate the RMV or when there is no power in the vehicle.

Force Fields: Force fields are available on the larger powered suits of armor and on all RMVs. They are fields of energy that enclose the RMV and protect it from physical damage. There are three different types of force fields: Energy fields, kinetic fields and magnetic (or repulsion) fields. For more information on force fields, see the GAMMA WORLD rules, page 73. Table 7 on the next page shows the force fields available on the RMV.

✦ The energy force field is an early field generator that burns out when exposed to excessive damage. It absorbs half the damage points inflicted against the RMV from every attack until its limit is reached; then it collapses. For example, if a 20-point energy field is hit by an attack that inflicts 30 points of damage, 15 points are absorbed by the field, and the remaining 15 points hits the RMV. If the attack (or combination of attacks in a single round) causes 50 points of damage, 20 would be absorbed by the suit while 20 would hit the RMV. At that point, the force field collapses and the remaining 10 points also hits the RMV. After collapsing, the field generator recycles in 10 rounds and can be powered up again. Only one energy force field can operate in the same RMV at one time. If a second field is added, both collapse and must recycle.

✦ Kinetic force fields are the most powerful. No damage penetrates the field as long as it operates. When the field's damage limit is reached or exceeded, the field collapses and must recycle for 10 minutes before it can be restored. For example, a 75-point kinetic force field absorbs the first 74 damage points in a series of combat rounds and maintains its integrity. The 75th point that hits the field collapses it. All points beyond the 75-point threshold all hit the RMV. When the kinetic force field is turned off after a combat, it comes back

to full strength in 10 minutes. If the RMV activates the kinetic force field during that time, the field comes on but at the weakened state. Unless the kinetic field generator is given a full 10 minutes of rest, it will always come on at the weakened state.

✦ Repulsion force fields are by far the weakest of the three generators. The field does not absorb damage, but instead creates a strong repulsion field around the RMV that deflects incoming attacks, thereby improving the vehicle's Armor Class. A repulsion field generator does not burn out from use; it functions until the generator itself is damaged.

Table 7: Force Field Generators

Field Type	Points/Round
Energy, 10 point	10
Energy, 20 point	22
Energy, 30 point	33
Energy, 40 point	44
Energy, 50 point	55
Energy, 75 point	77
Energy, 100 point	1010
Kinetic, 30 point	26
Kinetic, 50 point	410
Kinetic, 75 point	615
Kinetic, 100 point	820
Kinetic, 150 point	1025
Kinetic, 175 point	1230
Kinetic, 200 point	1435
Repulsion, +1	AC1n/a
Repulsion, +2	AC2n/a
Repulsion, +3	AC3n/a
Repulsion, +4	AC4n/a
Repulsion, +5	AC5n/a
Repulsion, +6	AC6n/a

Locomotive Assist Options

Locomotive options are available on all RMVs. There are four possible types of movement capabilities on the RMVs: enhanced movement, jet-assist, antigrav flight, and underwater movement.

✦ Enhanced movement employs hydraulics and liquid technology, sensing the movement objectives of the user. Table 8 lists the number of slots needed to outfit the RMV with various movement options.

All the slots must be used in the RMV's legs, if possible. If the legs do not have enough slots available to hold the complete movement package, the remaining slots can be used in either the back plate or the front plate.

Table 8: Locomotive Options

RMV	x2	x3	x4	x5
Ambassador	19	38	57	76
Excelsior	16	32	48	64
Executioner	22	44	66	88
Supervisory	26	52	78	104

✦ Jet-assist jumps allow the RMV to move great distances in short time spans. The user springs into the air with a jet-assisted jump and lands the next round wherever he or she chooses—within range of the jet assist. Table 9 lists the distances that can be traveled with a jet-assisted jump. To install the jet-assisted movement option, the RMV must have 16 slots open on either the legs or the back plate.

Table 9: Jet-Assist Jump Distances
RMV Jump Distance
(in meters/round)

X-Caliber	80
Ambassador	50
Excelsior	60
Executioner	40
Supervisory	30

✦ Antigrav Flight is the ultimate in RMV transportation. This allows the vehicle to hover in place and negotiate any turn or narrow space, if moving slowly (Speed 9 or less). Since it is not dependant upon contact with the ground, the RMV can fly very fast, but it can accelerate or decelerate only by +/-3 every round. Because of its nature, the antigrav flight option works identically on any RMV. Therefore, every RMV with antigrav flight must use 16 slots in either the back plate or the front plate sections of the RMV.

✦ Underwater Movement option uses 12 slots. It enables the user to move about in water of any depth as though he or she were on dry land. Normally, water knee-deep or higher reduces the movement rate by one-half. This option negates this penalty.

Strength Enhancements

Strength enhancements are available on all RMVs. They enable the RMV to lift tremendous weights. As a side effect, the same option allows the user to cause extraordinary damage by punching. Normally, a punch from an RMV causes 1d12 points of damage, but this option can increase this damage to 11d12!

Table 10 below lists the types of strength enhancements and the slots they need to function. The strength enhancement can be turned off and on as power needs change throughout any combat. This table also slows the amount of weight that can be carried by a strength-enhanced RMV. Carrying an amount equal to or less than the unburdened rating allows the user to move at normal rates. Carrying weights between the unburdened and the burdened rating cuts the RMV's top speed by 50%.

Table 10:
Strength Enhancement

Slots Arm	Punch Damage	Carrying Capacity (Kg)	
0	d12x1	1,000	2,000
2	d12x2	2,000	4,000
3	d12x3	3,000	6,000
4	d12x4	4,000	8,000
8	d12x5	5,000	10,000
10	d12x6	6,000	12,000
12	d12x7	7,000	14,000
14	d12x8	8,000	16,000
16	d12x9	9,000	18,000
18	d12x10	10,000	20,000
20	d12x11	11,000	22,000

Computer

This option is available as standard equipment. Computers—usually the size of a cassette tape—can be programmed to fire weapons automatically.

Installing the computer option requires two open slots in one location. It can perform three different tasks; fire a weapon at specific targets, fire a weapon at the closest target (proximity sanction), or fire a weapon at incoming grenades and missiles (CIWS). To select or cancel an option takes one full round.

To conduct automatic fire at a specific target, the RMV's user must indicate the target, the weapon to be fired, and which sensor will aim the weapon. The computer then fires the weapon automatically every round, at its highest ROF, until the target moves out of range, out of sight, is destroyed, or the automatic fire order is canceled. Sensor and weapon THAC bonuses apply, but all computer-fired weapons have a -2 THAC penalty. A weapon set to fire automatically cannot be used by the operator. Firing at the nearest target requires the proximity sanction

program. It operates exactly like automatic fire at a specific target, except the computer always fires upon the nearest enemy.

Conducting antimissile and antigrenade fire requires the CIWS (see-wise, or Close-In Weapon System) program. This is a set up exactly like the other two. While CIWS is running, the player rolls 1d10 every time a grenade or missile is targeted to land within 25 meters of the RMV. A roll of 7 through 10 destroys a grenade before it explodes, 8 through 10 a micromissile, and 9 through 10 a minimissile.

Table 11: CIWS Success Rating

Target Success Rating	1d10 Roll
Grenade	7-10 (40%)
Micromissile	8-10 (30%)
Minimissile	9-10 (20%)

Computer Enhancements

A computer upgrade occupies one additional slot anywhere on the RMV. It enables the computer to perform two functions simultaneously. These can be two different or the same function; they can have the same or different targets. None of the functions can share sensors or weapons. An upgrade does not work without a computer. A computer can only run weapons installed on the back plate, helmet, or front plate. Any other weapon can only be used by the RMV's occupant. The repair system cannot mend the computer or the upgrade.

Standardized Equipment

The following systems are available for all models of RMVs.

Dehumidifier: When the life support system is functioning, or as long as power flows, the dehumidifier keeps condensation from forming on the inside of the RMV and maintains the humidity at a nominal level.

External Broadcast System: As long as the RMV has power, the occupant can broadcast his voice via an external speaker system. The voice is broadcast at the same tone, pitch, and volume as is spoken, allowing for voice recognition. The occupant can hear what is spoken outside as well, allowing communications without leaving the RMV.

Internal Gyroscope: This system does not use any power. The gyroscope is a weighted ball suspended in a heavy water solution. It constantly tells the occupant which direction the RMV is facing and the RMV's angle.

Outer Space Systems: This system protects the RMV's occupant against vacuum, cold, and common types of radiation (Int 10 or less).

Rust Proofing: Whether the RMV is constructed from duralloy or protected with a duraplast sealant, the armored vehicle never rusts and its components never corrode.

Even after exposure to the ocean or centuries of neglect and pollution, the RMV remains in excellent condition. (Dirt and grime, on the other hand, can collect on the RMV's shell, giving it an unkempt and dirty appearance.)

Underwater Systems: This system allows the RMV to enter fresh and salt water without damage. As long as the RMV has an active life support system, the occupant is safe.

This crucial system allows the life support system to remove dissolved oxygen from the water, or break down water molecules, releasing hydrogen back into the water and using the oxygen to replenish the RMV's air.

Table 12: Ranged Weapons for the RMV

Weapon	Damage	Range	ROF	THAC+	Slots
Blaster, Mk V	d8x5	25	1	+2	3
Blaster, Mk VII	d10x5	40	1	+2	4
Blaster, Mk XII	d10x8	50	1	+6	5
Blunderbuss, Cannon	d8x4	100	1	+6	3
Blunderbuss, Mount	d8x8	150	1	+8	5
Cannon, Fission	d8x3	150	1	+3	5
Coagulator, Stokes	d6x11	3	1	+3	2
Conversion Beamer	d10x6	80	1	+3	4
Crossbow, Heavy	d8x2	15	1/3	+0	2
Cyclorator	d6x3	120	1/2	+10	6
Dart, Smart	d6x3	12	1	Varies	1
Flame Thrower	d6x3	30	1	+2	2
Flying Blades	d8xSTR	3	1	+10	0
Grenade Launcher	Varies	40	1	+0	3
Gun, Gatling	d10x2	100	254	+4	2
Gun, Gravity	d6 + 1	20	1	+5	2
Gun, Machine	d8x3	100	104	+8	2
Gun, Plasma	d10x5	30	1	+2	3
Harmonic Disrupter	Special5	25	1/2	+1	2
Javelin	d6xSTR	4	1	+0	0
Lamprey Disk	Special	0	1	n/a	0
Micromissile	Varies	50	1	Varies	3
Minimissile	Varies	25	1	Varies	4
Needler	d6/special	7	2	+0	1
Pistol, Black Ray	Int 123	6	1	+1	1
Pistol, Graser	Int 20	30	1/2	+8	6
Pistol, Laser, IR	d6x3	20	1	+3	1
Pistol, Laser, UV	d8x3	30	1	+3	1
Pistol, Machine	d8x2	10	26	+2/+4	1
Pistol, Maser	d10x3	40	2	+3	1
Pistol, Slicer	n/a	20	1	+0	1
Pistol, Stun Ray	n/a	20	1	+0	1
Rifle, Assault	d6x3	40	22	+2/+4/+8	2
Rifle, Black Ray	Int 183	12	1	+2	2
Rifle, Fusion	d6x8	40	1	+6	6
Rifle, Graser	Int 22	60	1/3	+12	8
Rifle, Laser, IR	d6x4	60	1	+5	2
Rifle, Laser, UV	d8x4	75	1	+5	2
Rifle, Laser, VL	d6x4	25	1	+3	2
Rifle, Maser	d10x4	100	2	+5	2
Rifle, Plasma	d10x10	30	1	+15	8
Rifle, Slicer	d6x8	30	1	+10	6
Rifle, Stun Ray	n/a	35	1	+2	2
Screamer	d10x4	5	1	+0	3
Shotgun, Buckshot	d6x4	10	2	+0	2
Shrapneler	d10x8	50	1	+2	Special
Slug Thrower	d6x3	15	1	+1	1
Stinger Crystal	d6x2	10	1	+1	1
Tangler	d8x2	8	1	+0	1
Taser	d3	3	1	+0	1
Wrapper	Special	50	1/4	+0	1

Weapons

Tables 12 (above) and 14 detail most of the weapons that are available for the RMV. Others may be available depending upon individual campaigns, and others will be unearthed as time passes.

Table 13: Close Combat Weapons

Weapon	Damage	THAC+	Slots
Attached Blades	d8xSTR	+0	0
Axe-Hand	d8xSTR	+0	0
Bayonet	d6xSTR	+0	0
Bite, Neural	Stun	+5	1
Club-Hand	d6xSTR	+0	0
Flying Blades	d8xSTR	+10	0
Halberd	d10xSTR	+0	0
Hammer-Hand	d6xSTR	+0	0
Javelin	d6xSTR	+0	0
Mace	d8xSTR	+0	0
Mace, Energy	d10x5	+5	1
Morning Star	d8xSTR	+0	0
Sword, Extra-Long	d12xSTR	+0	0
Sword, Long	d8xSTR	+0	0
Sword, Short	d6xSTR	+0	0
Vibro Blade	d6x8	+10	1
Vibro Dagger	d6x3	+6	1
Whip	d4xSTR	+0	0

Close Combat Weapons

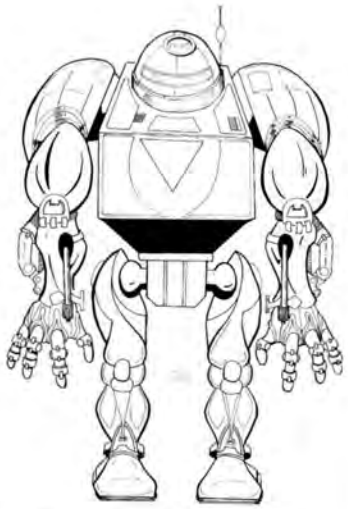
The weapons listed on Table 13 directly above are hand held by the applicable RMV.

To determine the damage caused by each of these weapons, the player uses the RMV's fist damage multiplier and the normal damage die of the weapon.

For example, an RMV with 16 slots of Strength enhancements in each arm has the damage modifier of x9 (see Table 10 on the previous page).

If that RMV uses a huge halberd (damage = d10 x STR), 1d10 x 7 is the inflicted damage.

illustrations by David Zenz



Ambassador Class RMV
Armor Class: 36
Total Slots: 180
H 15, LA 20, RA 25, FP 35; BP 41; LL 22; RL 22
Slots Used: 132
Slots Available: 10 (+13)
H5, LA 6, RA 15, FP 7, BP 5 (+8), LL 5, RL 5
Power Source: 3+3 QPCs
Locomotion: Antigrav flight, x3 movement
Force Field: Kinetic force field absorbs 150 points of damage.
Defenses: Auto-surgeon, Capsule sealant, Cloaking device, Computer scrambler, Death-activated self-destruct, Ejection system, EMP generator, Energy emission filter, IR absorption, Life Support with 72-hr. oxygen supply, Light filter, Medikit, Radar scrambler, Radio scrambler, Repair servos, Silencer, Smoke generator, Sound filter, Water circulation
Sensors: Energy-use, IR, Life, Motion, Radar, Radiation, Sound, Two-way radio, Ultraviolet, UV, Visual.
Weapons: Fists (Dmg d12x5), Laser rifle built into right forearm (Dmg: d6x4, Rng 60m), Laser rifle built into left forearm (Dmg: d6x4, Rng 60m)

The Ambassador Class RMV stands a full five meters. This RMV was often used by world ambassadors as they went from one diplomatic mission to another.

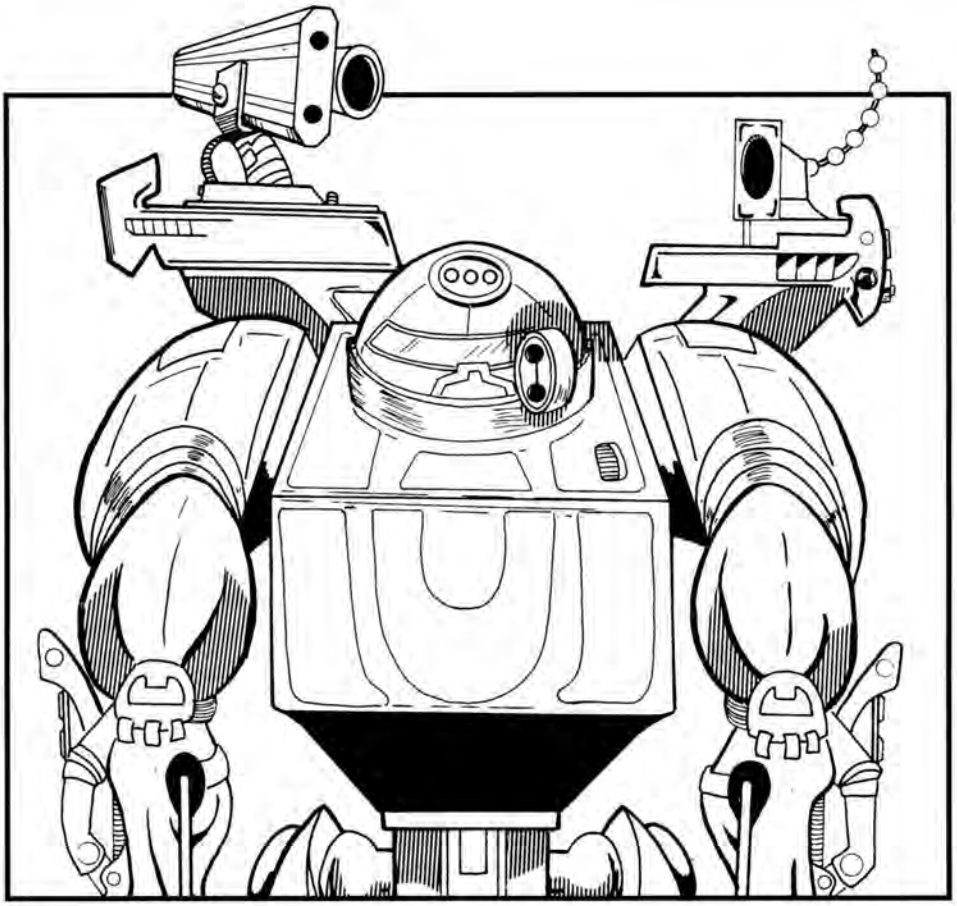
It is also the only RMV with a section in the chest for a passenger. As a diplomatic vessel, it carried few weapons, but it also carried a great deal of protective systems and sensors.

Ambassador Class

System	Power/Location
Antigrav flight	4BP
Autosurgeon	2FP
Capsule Sealant	1FP
Cloaking Device	8BP
Computer	4BP
Computer Scrambler	3LA
Computer upgrade	2BP
Ejection System	6BP
EMP Generator	6RA
Energy-Emission Filter	3LL
Energy-use sensor	1H
EPxA2-V	4BP
Hot plates	(5)0/eaBP
IR Absorption	2LA
IR sensor	1H
Kinetic force field	10BP
Laser pistol	(2)2/eaLA, RA
Life sensor	1H
Life support	2FP
Light Filter	1RL
Medikit	1FP
Motion sensor	1H
QPCs	(3+3)(48)FP
Radar Scrambler	1RA
Radar sensor	1H
Radiation sensor	1H
Radio Scrambler	2RL
Repair Servos	4FP
Self-destruct	1FP
Silencer	2RL
Smoke generator	1LL
Sound filter	1LL
Sound sensor	1H
Str. enhancement	8/armLA, RA
Two-way radio	1H
Ultraviolet sensor	1H
UV sensor	1H
Visual sensor	1H
Water Circulation	1RA
x3 movement	48LL, RL, BP

Table 14: Close Combat Weapons for the RMV

Grenade	Blast Dmg	Micromissile Radius	Blast Dmg	Minimissile Radius	Blast Dmg	Warhead Radius
Armor Piercing	—	—	d8x4	0	d8x6	0
Chemex	d6x3	10	d8x3	20	d10x3	40
ECM	—	20	—	35	—	70
Fission	d6x2	40	d8x2	75	d10x2	100
Flare	d6x2	60	d6x3	100	d6x4	150
Fragmentation	d6x3	15	d8x3	30	d8x4	45
Fusion	—	—	d4x2	40	d6x2	75
Gas, Poisonous	Int15	10	Int20	25	Int24	45
Gas, Tear	Int15	10	Int20	25	Int24	45
Gravity	d6xTons	30	d12xTons	40	d20xTons	60
High Explosive	d8x4	40	d10x4	50	d10x6	75
Photon	d8x3	25	d10x3	40	d10x4	60
Smoke	—	10	—	20	—	30
Stun	Int15	20	Int20	50	Int24	75
Tangler	d6x4	15	d8x4	25	d8x6	35
Torc	d8x6	15	d10x6	20	d10x8	40



Excelsior Class RMV
Armor Class: 30
Total Slots: 150
H 15, LA 15, RA 20, FP 30, BP 36, LL 17, RL 17
Slots Used: 132
Slots Available: 10 (+13), H 5, LA 1, RA 10, FP 2, BP +8, LL 0, RL 0
Power Source: 3 QPCs
Locomotion: Antigrav flight, x4 movement
Force Field: Kinetic force field absorbs 150 points of damage.
Defenses: Medikit, Death-activated self-destruct mechanism, Life Support system with 72-hr. oxygen supply
Sensors: IR, UV, Radio, Sound, Motion
Weapons: Laser rifle built into right forearm (Dmg: d6x4, Rng 60m), Laser rifle built into left forearm (Dmg: d6x4, Rng 60m), Micromissile launcher and clip of 20 missiles built into helmet (Dmg: varies, Rng 50m), Grenade Launcher with bolt to 15 grenades attached to left shoulder (Dmg varies, Rng 90m), Fists (Dmg d12x5), Mark XII Blaster (Dmg d10x8, Rng 50m)

The Excelsior Class RMV stands five meters. Literally a walking death machine, the Excelsior Class RMV was originally believed to be the most lethal land vehicle created by the ancients. As luck would have it, a group of Bonapartists about 1,000 km south of Pitz Burke have found one and are heading north with it.

Excelsior Class System	Power/Location
Antigrav flight	4BP
Computer	4BP
Computer upgrade	2BP
EPxA2-V	4BP
Grenade launcher	3 [+1]LA
Hot plates	5 [0/ea]BP
IR sensor	1H
Kinetic force field	10BP
Laser pistol	2 [2/ea]LA,RA
Life support	2FP
Mark XII Blaster	5BP
Medikit	1FP
Micromissile launcher	4 [+1]H
Motion sensor	1H
QPCs	3 [24]FP
Self-destruct	1FP
Sound sensor	1H
Str. enhancement	8 per arm LA,RA
Two-way radio	1H
UV sensor	1H
x4 movement	48LL,RL,BP

Executioner Class RMV
Armor Class: 42
Total Slots: 210
H 15, LA 25, RA 20, FP 40, BP 46, LL 27, RL 27
Slots Used: 201
Slots Available: 9 (+0), H 2, LA 0, RA 2, FP 1, BP 4 (+0), LL 0, RL 0
Power Source: 4+4 QPCs
Locomotion: Antigrav flight, x4 movement
Force Field: Kinetic force field absorbs 75 points of damage.
Defenses: Medikit, Death-activated self-destruct mechanism, Life Support with 72-hr. oxygen supply
Sensors: Energy use, Eye movement, IR, Motion, Radio, Sound, Underwater, UV
Weapons: Blunderbuss, cannon (Dmg: d8x4, Rng 100m), Blunderbuss, mount (Dmg: d8x8, Rng 150m), Cannon, fission (Dmg: d8x3, Rng 150m), Fists (Dmg d12x10), Grenade Launcher and bolt of 15 grenades (Dmg varies, Rng 90m), Gun, plasma (Dmg: d10x5, Rng 30m), Laser rifle (Dmg: d6x4, Rng 60m), Laser rifle (Dmg: d6x4, Rng 60m), Mark XII Blaster (Dmg d10x8, Rng 50m), Micromissile launcher and clip of 20 missiles (Dmg: varies, Rng 50m), Minimissile launcher and clip of 20 missiles (Dmg: varies, Rng 25m), Pistol, black ray (Dmg: Int 12, Rng 6m), Rifle, graser (Dmg: Int 22, Rng 60m), Tangler (Dmg: d8x2, Rng 8m), Wrapper (Dmg: special, Rng 50m)

The Executioner Class RMV stands six meters tall. A sturdy hatch on the chest, with a motorized retractable ladder, allows the user easily and quickly to enter the vehicle.

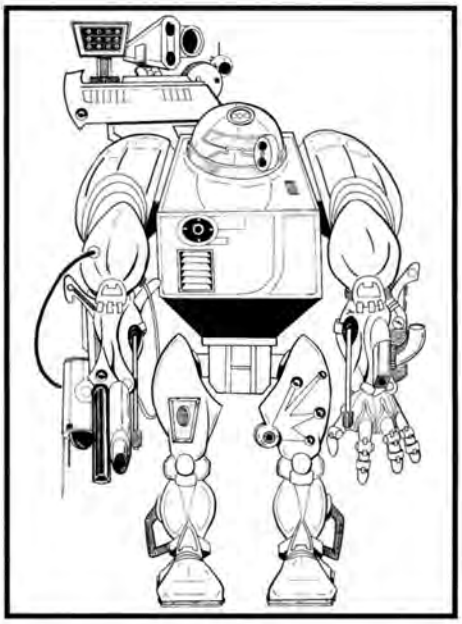
However, the hatch requires a Sergeant or greater military access card, which must be placed in a concealed slot before an individual can enter and use the device.

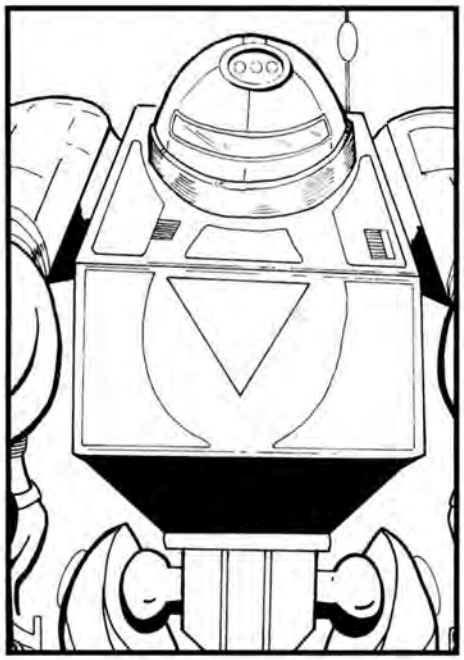
The occupant sits within the considerable chest cavity of the RMV, and he or she pilots the craft by using the several view screens and sensor arrays that are implanted into the "head" of the robotic vehicle.

The Executioner Class RMV is gilded to the brim with weapons and sensors, and its occupant sits in luxury in a large, padded chair. What this RMV lacks in defensive systems, it makes up for with the ability to annihilate anything that crosses its path.

This machine is most often referred to as the Ambassador Class RMV's antithesis.

Executioner Class System	Power/Location
Antigrav flight	4BP
Blunderbuss, cannon	3RA
Blunderbuss, mount	5BP
Cannon, fission	5RA
Computer	4BP
Computer upgrade	2BP
Energy use sensor	1H
EPxA2-V	4BP
Eye movement sensors	1H
Grenade launcher	3[+1]LA
Gun, plasma	3FP
Hot plates	[5]0@BP
Infrared sensor	1H
IR sensor	1H
Kinetic force field	6BP
Laser pistol	2[2]@LA,RA
Life support	2FP
Mark XII Blaster	5BP
Medikit	1FP
Micromissile launcher	4[+1]H
Minimissile launcher	4[+1]BP
Motion sensor	1H
Pistol, black ray	1LL
QPCs	[4+4][32]FP
Rifle, graser	8BP
Self-destruct	1FP
Sound sensor	1H
Str. enhancement	18 per arm LA,RA
Tangler	1RL
Two-way radio	1H
Ultraviolet sensor	1H
Underwater package	1H
UV sensor	1H
Wrapper	1LA
x4 movement	48LL,RL,BP





Supervisor Class RMV
Armor Class: 50
Total Slots: 250
H 25, LA 25, RA 30, FP 55, BP 61, LL 27, RL 27
Slots Used: 215
Slots Available: 35 (+4)
H 0, LA 11, RA 15, FP 9, BP 0 (+4), LL 0, RL 0
Power Source: 3+3 QPCs (affording 48 QPC units)
Locomotion: Antigrav flight, x4 movement
Force Field: Kinetic force field absorbs 200 points of damage plus +6 AC Repulsion force field backup.
Defenses: Autosurgeon, Capsule sealant, Cloaking device, Computer scrambler, Death-activated self-destruct mechanism, Ejection system, EMP generator, Energy emission filter, IR absorption, Life Support system with 72-hour oxygen supply, Light filter, Medikit, Radar scrambler, Radio scrambler, Repair servos, Silencer, Smoke generator, Sound filter, Water circulation
Sensors: Energy use, Eye movement, IR, Life, Motion, Radar, Radiation, Radio, Sound, Underwater, UV
Weapons: Laser rifle built into right forearm (Dmg: d6x4, Rng 60M), Laser rifle built into left forearm (Dmg: d6x4, Rng 60m), Micromissile launcher and clip of 20 missiles built into helmet (Dmg: varies, Rng 50m), Grenade Launcher with bolt to 15 grenades attached to left shoulder (Dmg varies, Rng 90m), Fists (Dmg d12x5), Mark XII Blaster (Dmg d10x8, Rng 50m)

The Supervisor Class RMV stands an impressive 6.5 meters tall and requires a high-ranking military access card.

As shown by the system breakdown that follows, the Supervisory Class RMV is just as armed as the Excelsior Class, giving it a hearty lethality, but its greatest strength is in the protective systems installed in every model. This versitile machine is extremely hard to hit, making it the perfect Field Marshall's RMV. ❑

Supervisor Class System	Power/Location
Antigrav flight	4FP
Autosurgeon	2FP
Capsule sealant	1FP
Cloaking device	8BP
Computer	4BP
Computer scrambler	3RA
Computer upgrade	2BP
Ejection system	6BP
EMP generator	6FP
Energy emission filter	3FP
Energy use sensor	1H
EPxA2-V	4BP
Eye movement sensor	1H
Grenade launcher	3(+1) LA
Hot plates	(5) 0@BP
Infrared sensor	1H
IR absorption	2H
IR sensor	1H
Kinetic force field	14BP
Laser pistol	(2) 2@LA, RA
Life sensor	1H
Life support system	2FP
Light filter	1H
Mark XII Blaster	5BP
Medikit	1FP
Micromissile launcher	4(+1)H
Motion sensor	1H
QPCs	(3) (24)FP
Radar sensor	1H
Radar scrambler	1H
Radiation sensor	1H
Radio scrambler	2H
Repair servos	4FP
Repulsion force field	6BP
Self-destruct	1FP
Silencer	2RA
Smoke generator	1LL
Sound filter	1H
Sound sensor	1H
Strength enhancement	8/arm LA, RA
Two-way radio	1H
Ultraviolet sensor	1H
Underwater package	1H
UV sensor	1H
Water circulation	1LL
x4 movement	57LL, RL, BP

Suel Lich

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any/Southern Oerth
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Supra-genius
TREASURE:	A
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral Evil

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	15+
THAC0:	16 base
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See Below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	1% per hit die
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	10,000 +1,000 per level

When the empire of the Suel was destroyed by the Rain of Colorless Fire more than a millennia ago, one of the few creatures to survive this destruction was the Suel-lich. This powerful wizard, similar to the common lich, endures the centuries by transferring its life force from one human host to the next.

A Suel-lich appears as a human with coarse, leathery skin and eyes which glow an ominous black fire. As the Suel-lich grows in power, the skin becomes a thick hide, and the fire in its eyes becomes more pronounced. At the peak of its power, the Suel-lich is little more than wrinkled husk whose head is bathed in black fire. Those who meet a Suel-lich are in for more than they likely can handle.

Combat: Unlike the common lich, the Suel-lich revels in combat against weaker foes. Although it normally doesn't go looking for a fight, the creature will often fight to the death against superior forces (and usually wins).

Any creature with fewer than 3 Hit Dice that gazes into the fiery eyes of the Suel-lich must save vs death magic at +3 or die of fright. Those who make their save are paralyzed with terror for 1d4 turns, and are at the mercy of the evil creature.

The touch of a Suel-lich causes black flame to erupt from the victim, inflicting 1-10 points of damage upon contact. The victim must also make a saving throw vs paralysis or be unable to move. This paralysis lasts until dispelled or until 24 hours pass. This attack ignores all armor, and any item touched in this way must make a save vs. magical fire or be damaged.

The Suel-lich can be hit only by +1 or better weapons or by monsters with 7 or more Hit Dice and/or magical properties. In addition to their natural magic resistance, the Suel-lich is immune to all mind affecting spells, death spells, and wizard and clerical spells below 3rd level. Because of its unique connection with the Negative Material Plane, the spell *negative plane protection* inflicts 5d10 points of damage to the creature if it gets past its magic resistance.

A Suel-lich casts spells as it did before its transformation, but, due to its dark nature and years of magical research, does not require material components. A Suel-lich is considered a special for purposes of turning.

Habitat/Society: Several Suel-liches escaped the Rain of Colorless Fire and migrated into the Flanaess from what is now the Sea of Dust. Some of these liches still roam the world, vying for wealth and power, while others exist in hidden strongholds continuing their ageless research. Regardless of its intentions, the Suel-lich always attempts to hide its true nature. Since little knowledge (written or oral) survived the Colorless Fire, only a handful of sages and loremasters have even heard of such creatures.

Ecology: The Suel-lich is an unholy amalgamation of the human body and energy from the Negative Material Plane. Upon transformation into a Suel-lich, the essence of the wizard is converted to negative energy that needs a human body to inhabit. While possessing a body, the essence of the lich causes the body to age at three times the normal rate, burning it out after a short time. Each time a Suel-lich gains a level, burns out a host, or is reduced to zero hit points, it must find a new body to inhabit.

When it comes time to seek a new body, the essence of the lich must take a host with Hit Die or levels equal to the liches level minus 15. Thus, a 19th level Suel-lich must take the form of a 4th level human. If the victim is unconscious, unable to resist, or gives his or her body willingly, no saving throw is allowed verses the transformation. If the victim is conscious or able to resist, a saving throw vs death magic at -1 is allowed to resist possession. The essence of the victim is destroyed when possessed; the spirit is annihilated and cannot be raised or restored by a *wish* spell. If the host body is destroyed, the lich has one hour to inhabit another body or its essence disperses into nothingness. While without a host body, the essense of the lich appears as fiery black energy. While in this form, a *dispel evil* or *holy word* destroys the lich forever.

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Continued from page 2

Illinois: I am a 23-year-old planning to begin gaming again. I would like to play either edition of the AD&D® game in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting or the GREYHAWK® setting. If you need an extra player, please write to me: Jason Nelson, 519 Gregory Avenue, Apt. 1B, Glendale Heights, IL 60139.

Illinois: Looking to start a new RPGA® Network club in the Springfield area. non-Network role-players are welcome, too. Experience in GURPS (all genres), the AD&D game, *Warhammer*, *Earthdawn*, and many more games. Young and old players are welcome. For more info, contact: Ryan Pennington, 3040 South 2nd Street, Springfield, IL 62703.

Israel: I am a 20-year-old player of many systems, and I'm looking for contact with other AD&D game players. I've played in the FORGOTTEN REALMS, DRAGONLANCE®, SPELLJAMMER®, and DARK SUN® settings. I would like to contact other DMs who have played in these worlds and who are looking for even more magical and fantastic worlds. Also, I'm looking for players interested in the 3D SPELLJAMMER tactical battles idea. Contact me at: 20th Herbert Samoel Street, Petah Tiqua City, Israel, 49429.

Massachusetts: Rathskeller Gamers are looking for quality players and game masters. Do you have what it takes? We meet weekly in Springfield on Saturday nights. We play many different game systems as well as help out at area conventions. Want to get involved but don't know how? Give us a try. Call (413) 736-3874 M-F between 5-9 p.m. and ask for Carl. Be sure to leave your name and number if I am not at home. Thank you!

Montana: I Warlord, an elven mage/fighter of vast power, summon forth all adventurers in or around Billings. Please call upon Chris Mize, an AD&D game player/DM who is interested in learning other role-playing systems. If you would like to create a gaming group or club, write: 619 Clark Avenue, Billings, MT 59101.

Hawaii: Oahu and outer islands: If you would like to start a Network club or are interested in attending our monthly meetings, please contact me any time: Eric Kline, P.O. Box 90182, Honolulu, HI 96835-0182. Or Call: (808) 623-3909.

New York: Have you been looking all over town for a role-playing group to join? Can't find anyone nearby who games? If you live in the Westchester County area and are around the age of 12, your problems are solved! If you want to join an AD&D game group, call (914) 238-3612 and ask for Matt Smith.

New York: the Hudson Valley Gamer Network (HVGN) publishes a newsletter and plans a gamers' directory for Dec. 1994. Any gamer in NY State can get on the mailing list; the directory will be limited to gamers in Orange, Ulster, Sullivan, Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, and Rockland counties. Write to Hudson Valley Gamer Network, c/o Spencer E. Hart, RD 1, Box 636, New Hampton NY 10958.

New York: Hi! I'm looking for experienced players in the Selden/Centereach area to start a gaming club. Please respond quickly to: Frank Winters, 78 Wyoma Avenue, Selden, NY 11794. Or call: (516) 696-7220

New York: I'm looking for players in Dutchess/Ulster counties interested in starting a club. I've played only a couple of times but am eager to learn from a beginning level. If you're between 19 and 30 and are willing to start off a beginner's campaign, please write: Tina Ranallo, 14 Dutchess Terrace, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590.

New York: Attention Long Island Gamers! I'm looking to join a game or club on Long Island in the Nassau/Suffolk area and to get involved in any PBM games. I have eight years of gaming and two years of DMing experience. I'm also interested in play-by-mail games, forming a club, and pen pals, especially women gamers. All letters will be answered. Write: Nick Vulpis, 20 Janice Lane, Central Islip, NY 11722.

Ohio: Looking for gamers or group in the Toledo area. Interested in just about any games, especially the AD&D game, *Vampire*, *Champions*, and *Shadowrun*. Also interested in learning tactical systems and wish to correspond with others about SF, fantasy, and horror genres. Seven McKenzie, 1118 Baker, Toledo, OH 43608.

Ohio: Experienced, 18-year-old gamer will be attending Bowling Green State University this fall and would like to join a group in the area. I play the D&D® and AD&D games, SPELLJAMMER setting, *MechWarrior*, *BattleTech*, *GURPS*, *Ghostbusters*, and several strategic war games. Please write to Ryan Staake, 7465 Cement City Road, Brooklyn, MI 49230, or call (517) 592-8417.

Pen Pal: Looking for a fellow gamer in New Zealand to discuss role-playing games, music, books, computers, immigration procedures, and life. That should cover it. Anyone else who wants to write to me in English or Spanish (you se un poco) is welcome. I'll answer all letters, but I'm not guaranteeing they'll be answered quickly. I'm a 20-year-old male gamer (too many systems to list) who's currently studying engineering and working in the auto industry. Write me on the Internet at af696@leo.nmc.edu or Edward Elsner, 9304 Wabun Court, Flushing, MI 48433-1219, USA.

Pennsylvania: Looking for a gaming group in the greater Pittsburgh area. I prefer the AL-QADIM® and DARK SUN settings, but I will play other RPGs. Call (412) 441-4404, or send e-mail to ja3k+@andrew.cmu.edu.

Ravens Bluff: Followers of Torm, my purpose is twofold: I am beginning construction of a temple in the Living City and would appreciate any physical or monetary assistance; also, I am trying to create a listing of the addresses and phone numbers of the players of the many followers of Torm. I'll be glad to send a copy of this list to anyone who replies. Reach me at 56 Wallington Avenue, Wallington, NJ 07057. Or call Frank at (201) 458-1120. Drahl of Torm.

Texas: Gamers of Austin Texas is looking for gamers around central Texas to join the club! Club events include a monthly ATCon held in the Austin area. For more info, write: G.O.A.T., 13492 Research Boulevard #120-181, Austin, TX 78750-2254. Or write: (512) 867-3821.

Trading Cards: Help a fellow collector. I am looking for the following TSR ruby cards (in prime condition): 56, 57, 60, 135, 291, 292, 293, 317, 322, 337, 347, 367, 377, 387, 404, 436, 451. I've over 250+ ruby doubles with which to trade. Plenty of rare 1993 cards, too! Write: Franklin W. George, Jr., Liendenhof 90, 1108 HD Amsterdam Z.O., The Netherlands.